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LETTERS

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FROM

MRS. ELIZABETH CARTER,

TO

MRS. MONTAGU,

BETWEEN THE YEARS 1755 AND 1800.

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BETWEEN THE YEARS 1755 AND 1800.

CHIEFLY UPON LITERARY AND MORAL SUBJECTS.

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PUBLISHED FROM THE
ORIGINALS IN THE POSSESSION
OF THE

REV. MONTAGU PENNINGTON, M.A.

VICAR OF NORTHBOURN IN KENT, AND PERPETUAL CURATE OF ST. GEORGE'S CHAPEL, DEAL, HER NEPHEW AND EXECUTOR.

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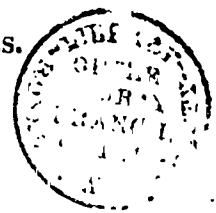
Digni sunt amicitia, quibus in ipsis inest causa cur diligantur.
CIC. DE AMICIT.

Extremum hunc—mihi concedo laborem.—VIRG.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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LETTER CX.

Deal, *August* 10, 1768.

I HAD the pleasure of receiving your letter, my dear friend, this evening at my return from Wingham, from whence I wrote to you on Wednesday last. My head-ach vexatiously lasted during the whole time of my stay there, which was an unavoidable allay to my enjoyment of this little excursion, in which I was disposed to find much satisfaction.

I think you pretty well agree with my admiration of the Troades, though you do not particularly mention your being struck with that circumstance in the behaviour of Cassandra, which appears to me so perfect a master-piece. I cannot help differing from you a little in the conduct of Euripides with regard to the character of Hecuba, which seems to me to be perfectly well contrived, and most exquisitely drawn from nature, which would scarcely have been the case if

he had confounded the subjects of her lamentation with those of Andromache. Perhaps there is no instance in which Euripides has more discovered the power of his genius, than his representing the different feelings arising in so many different persons from one common distress. It is surely very natural that amidst the pains and helplessness, and decrepitude of old age, the noble and sentimental affections should be weakly exerted, and the attention be chiefly engaged by the loss of the alleviations and comforts of harassed and weary life. The expression of such a regret would have been very improper at the active age of Andromache: but poor old Hecuba's aching bones, for which you seem to have so very little sympathy, every moment reminded her of the inconveniences of a hard bed. Hamlet does not enumerate, but just hints at bodily evils, in the pains that "flesh is heir to:" but however you will allow that no parallel can be drawn between him and Hecuba. The bawling old nurse in Romeo and Juliet had not the softness and pomp of Asiatic and regal luxury to oppose to the wants and hardships of captivity. The circumstances of Lear carry some resemblance to Hecuba, but there is I think a sufficient difference, to justify the different conduct of these two great tragic poets, and exempt each of them from censure.

sure. Lear had not lost the ideas of sovereign power which he had so lately resigned: and his high spirit and unsubdued pride, made him feel the sudden and astonishing change of his situation, to a degree which left him little leisure to attend to the bodily part of his sufferings, and raised his passions to a height, which Shakespear has most judiciously terminated in madness. I deliver up Neptune and Pallas, and the whole mob of heathen divinities with very little compunction to the secular arm of your severest criticism. The ancient poets understood human nature, but were absurd and puerile to a strange degree, whenever they attempted to describe divine intelligences. Even Homer, who had so extensive and astonishing a knowledge in the whole circle of human things, is so miserably deficient in his representations of the deity, that his Jupiter often appears as contemptible and ridiculous as the hero of a puppet show.

Mr. Thomson's Agamemnon is a noble tragedy. It is some time since I read it: but I think it is Æschylus, and not Euripides, whom he copies in his Cassandra.

I hope you will as fast as possible get rid of all remaining sympathy with my head-ach. Mine is a very unimportant head to the world either of business or of literature, and may act *sans con-*

 sequence;

sequence; but yours has much to transact in both, and its operations are destined to a much more extensive circle than mine.

Probably you have read in the papers an account that the Archbishop was extremely ill, and I find the same news has been brought into the country by private report. But, I thank God, there is no truth in it. His Grace, in spite of the liberality of the news writers, who have assigned him four physicians, has no other than those which he had when I left Lambeth, and they do not think him at all worse. His rheumatism is painful and dispiriting, but I hope and believe, not attended by any symptom of danger whatever.

I had lately a letter from our Sylph, who seems to be well and in spirits. She has sent me two extremely pretty drawings of different views of Lucan, executed from memory by Lady Bingham.*

I think you know something of Mr. and Mrs. Neve; poor souls, they have lately lost their eldest son at Oxford, by the unhappy accident of hurting his foot against a stump or something of

* Wife of Sir Charles Bingham, afterwards Earl of Lucan; a most amiable and highly accomplished woman. The views of Lucan here mentioned, were taken from the grounds of Mr. Vesey's house there.

that

that kind, as he was bathing in a river. They are come to Deal to go into the sea, there are several more strangers here upon the same occasion, and among the rest I hear Miss Fryon is to take lodgings here. Our Kentish races begin to-morrow, and I should have felt some temptation to go to Canterbury, for one of the early assemblies, if my head had not discouraged me by being so perverse at Wingham. It would have given me pleasure to have had an opportunity of seeing some people, whom I am not at present very likely to meet any where else. Adieu, my dear friend. My arm is troublesome.

Yours, &c.

LETTER CXI.

Lambeth, *August* 16, 1768.

I WAS made very happy yesterday, my dear friend, by your letter, which gave me hopes of getting an unexpected sight of you. As you are desirous of knowing the situation of our friends*, I am not willing to defer writing this

* Upon the death of Archbishop Secker.

post,

post, as you are not perfectly determined when you shall set out. Miss Talbot's health is, upon the whole, I thank God, wonderfully preserved, and her spirits, to all appearance better than from her general weakness might be expected. She discovers the most perfect composure, and even cheerfulness; but it is evidently more from her principles, than from her feelings; but such a conflict from a sense of duty must be rewarded with success, and I hope she will grow into a comfortable state, as soon as the present recollections which every minute, in this melancholy house, must force on her mind, are weakened by a change of scene and situation. It was scarcely possible for her to accept the kind offer to herself and Mrs. Talbot, from Mrs. Scott, and many other of their friends, as they must have so much unavoidable business, before they quit this place. They have never been able to get any information about a proper house in town, till to-day, when one has been named in Grosvenor-street, which, I hope, will suit them. We are to see it to-morrow morning. If this point is once settled, every other business will go on with more smoothness and regularity. The variety of houses which have been proposed, all attended with some casual objection or other, has been very perplexing and harassing to their minds, and consequently to

mine, who feel all their difficulties. Yet I am glad to be with them, as they think I do them some little good. Mrs. Talbot's spirits have grievous fits of sinking. The long inactivity of a uniform life, and the being constantly habituated to the assistance and advice of one to whom every difficulty could be referred, renders every deliberation, at present, particularly distressing. Mr. Frost is here, and the chaplains, and the present order of the family, which renders it proper for them all to dine together, is a good circumstance, and introduces a variety of conversation, which is very useful, and helps to suspend the attention to one painful subject. I delivered your message to Dr. Porteus *. I know not whether you are acquainted with him, if not, he deserves that you should.

I have not yet been without the walls of this house, as I would not be absent for a quarter of an hour, when I might happen to be of use, in giving relief to the spirits of my friends; but I

* Afterwards better known as Bishop of London. A most amiable, excellent, and exemplary Prelate. He continued his friendship for Mrs. Carter, which commenced while he was chaplain to Archbishop Secker, to the end of his life; and gave the living of Thorley in Hertfordshire to her nephew, the Rev. Thomas Pennington, the Editor's elder brother.

will

will certainly come to you, as soon as I hear of your arrival, and I know both Mrs. and Miss Talbot will wish to see you here. I hear the post-bell, so adieu.

LETTER CXII.

Lambeth, *October* 4, 1768.

More last words, my dear friend, as I was not willing to set out till I had thanked you for your letter, and for your kind commission for my reception in Hill-street, though it will certainly not be in my power to avail myself of it, as I am, for several reasons, very impatient to get home, where, so far as I am of any use, I shall be wanted for settling my *domestique* with two new servants, whom I would gladly establish *et mettre en train*, against the time of my going to town. Our journey on Tuesday was, from the hurry of business, obliged to be postponed for two days, but it is now absolutely fixed for Thursday, and on Friday, I hope to be at home. Indeed, I most earnestly long to get quietly settled in my own apartment, or indulged in reveries on the sea-shore, after so many weeks of an uncomfortable

comfortable confusion, as must necessarily attend the situation in which Lambeth is at present.

I could not compass spending a day in town, as our journey was so long delayed, but I took the liberty of calling at your house, one day last week, for about five minutes, to wait for an answer to a note. I was in your dressing-room, which, I hope, you will soon animate, and recover from its present unnatural state of solitude and silence. Indeed, I shall be heartily glad to hear you are fixed there, and that you have left the gloom and damp of November behind you.

I have been unwell, but am now better, though I feel nothing of the vivacity of returning health; however, I have great reason to be thankful, that I am no longer under the apprehension of being downright ill, in a situation which would have been so particularly grievous, and given so much trouble to my friends, in such an unsettled state. The change of air will do me good, and getting into my usual *train de vie*, which I would not have quitted, to share any scheme of amusement or pleasure, though, as long as I am able, I hope, I shall always be disposed to sacrifice it to the distresses of a friend.

I rejoice in the prospect of meeting our dear Sylph in town next winter, to which I please myself in looking forward with cheerful hope of enjoying

enjoying our usual society. I am sorry for those who would be the better for Mrs. Vesey's earlier arrival, that it will be deferred so long; though I shall be perfectly well satisfied to find her in the delightful blue room the beginning of January.

If report says true, the Royal Dane will give you an opportunity of partaking of the *galanty-shows*, exhibited for his amusement, as it is said he is to return after his departure. It seems he has a curiosity to see the English manner of living in winter, when the town is quite peopled. I hope you will do credit to the nation, by making a party for him in Hill-street, and the Sylph in the blue room; and by this means, I may perhaps get a sight of him, though probably not a shake by the hand, like my nephew, James Pennington. I am told the show upon the river was extremely fine, but I was too ill on Friday to attempt seeing any part of it; and indeed in my present situation, I should scarcely have conjured up spirit and activity enough to take any trouble about it, even if I had been well.

I think you have great fortitude in resisting the masquerade ticket. I am told, from pretty good authority, that our King's compliance with the proposal was rather from a forced complaisance than a voluntary consent. However, as you observe, if masquerades are not to be more frequent

quent in our island, than the visits of kings *, no great harm will happen; some harm there certainly is (not to include the common objections) in the waste of time and contrivance, and the excessive expence to which an idle emulation will tempt such numbers, as will wish to be distinguished, even for the short duration of this motley shew.

I have agreed with you, in wishing that the King of Denmark was to see Hamlet, on our stage. My nephew saw him at Macbeth, and says his Majesty was extremely attentive to Mr. Garrick, though I do not find that he understands a word of English. But Shakespear speaks to the heart, and Mr. Garrick to the senses of all mankind.

Mrs. Pulteney called on me last Friday, to go with her to Wimbledon, to see Miss Sutton, who is still there, but is to be brought to her house

* Mrs. Carter did not live to witness their greater frequency as well as splendour, in these latter days, in Paris as well as in London. See for an account of these in the former capital, after Buonaparte's first abdication, "Letters from a Lady to her Sister," printed for Longman, &c. 1814; in which those interesting scenes are delineated with uncommon spirit, truth, and elegance. The youthful authoress was Mrs. Carter's niece, youngest daughter to her eldest brother.

in

in London this week. Alas! I fear there is too much reason to apprehend, that her next stage will be to an abode from which she will remove no more. She appears to me to be in a very dangerous state, and Mrs. Pulteney has sent me a very indifferent account of her, since we were at Wimbledon. Mrs. Pulteney sets out for Bath this week, but proposes to shorten her stay, on Miss Sutton's account, nor would she go at all, but that she cannot help it.

Adieu, my dearest friend; I am going to a further distance from you; but I hope you are coming to town, which will bring you nearer to your truly affectionate.

LETTER CXIII.

Deal, *December* 4, 1768.

It was not till after my letter was dispatched, that I received yours, my dear friend, which brought me the account, which your last information had given me so much reason to expect. I thought my spirits would have been relieved by knowing, that my poor Miss Sutton was delivered from a miserable state of lingering pain;

pain; and indeed, I do rejoice that she is at rest; but I deeply and tenderly feel her loss. I have been writing to Mrs. Pulteney on this melancholy subject, who had so perfect an opportunity of knowing her merits, and who has lost a most sincere and faithful friend. "That she was one day to die," was indeed present to her thoughts, in its most solemn view; and in the last letter I ever received from her, she reminded me of one of our first conversations, which was on the awful part which she has now been acting, and for which she was warned to prepare by an early sense of the danger of her last illness.

I perfectly subscribe to your fair and candid account of the Duke of Newcastle's administration. The decency, and the many amiable circumstances which one has always heard of his private life, gives him an equitable claim to the best interpretation that can be given to the most exceptionable parts of his public conduct. Every allowance certainly ought to be made for the difficulties of such a situation, where the general character shews, that what cannot be defended, proceeds rather from those difficulties, than from the natural motions of an unprincipled and wicked heart. There never was any reason to suppose, but that the Duke meant well to the Constitution, and

and was a real friend to his country *. But the prosecution of the best intended measures, in political life, is too often accompanied by such deviations from the simple path of honesty, and carried on by such vile instruments, as revolt all the principles of strict morality.

I long to hear that our Sylph is safely landed, and safe from the blustering elements of a day like this; I am writing amidst an uproar of wind and rain. Do pray remind her of writing to me, and, if she is graceless enough to omit it, you certainly will let me know; it is an event too important in our society, for you to be in danger of forgetting it. I rejoice that Lady Ann Dawson † is to spend her winter among us. I am glad that the roses are still blooming and fresh on Hebe's cheeks. I must to my pillow.

* It might also be observed, although a minor consideration, that the Duke's splendid manner of living was such as to do honor to the high situation which he filled. And that he made no private and personal advantage of that situation, was proved by the injury which his fortune received, instead of advantage, from the high station in which he had been placed.

† Daughter of Thomas Fermor, Earl of Pomfret, and wife to Lord Dartrey, afterwards Lord Cremorne. She died in 1769. See the inscription on her monument, drawn up by Mrs. Carter, inserted in the Memoirs of her Life.

Friday.

THREE days has this letter laid in my drawer, unfinished, so ill have I been; but to-day is clear and fine, and I am determined to write, for fear you should be uneasy. Are you not petrified, my dear friend, absolutely so, even by your own fire-side? Then what must I be in a room penetrated by the freezing wind through every channel? It seems very perverse to find oneself the better for such weather, yet, thank God, I am.

I do indeed rejoice that dear Mrs. Vesey is safe from the horrors of this stormy weather; though she gave me such a description of her manner of travelling, after she had quitted the ship, as made me shudder. But I hope the most dangerous part of her journey was then over, and that, before this time, you have had the joy of receiving her safe in the environs of Berkeley-square. The indulgence which that situation will afford to the sentimental part of her composition, will probably make her amends for what her imagination will lose in contemplating the sublime terrors of Penmuenmaur. I admire and enjoy your idea of the aquatic entertainment; but, I believe upon the whole, we shall be gainers by its not taking place. For, as

it

it is not absolutely certain that Mr. Vesey is the *Sylphe mari*, he might have found such objections to wading up to his neck in water, as might have given him an insuperable aversion to the dear blue room, and confined him ever after to the *terra firma* on the other side of St. George's channel.

You have never told me, that the society at Hitcham was dissolved. My informant makes grievous lamentation for the scandal which she supposes this event will reflect on female friendship. Possibly it may, but the true state of the case seems to me, that people do not disagree either because they are men, or because they are women, but because they are human creatures. Indeed, it ought to raise no disadvantageous ideas of these ladies, that they did not find themselves so happy as they had expected to be in their scheme of living together. The only error was the want of consideration, from which they embarked in it. Four or five people may be very really and strictly united in principles, and the general tendency of their actions, and yet every one of them may have separate inclinations and dislikes, in subjects of an indifferent nature, which may be all equally innocent, and consequently may have an equal right to be gratified; which, in such a scheme, is impossible.

In

In family connections, indeed, all goes quietly on, from that subordination by which most points are regulated and determined. But the case is very different between the independent members of a voluntary society; and I believe there are very few, if any, instances, in which such a combination does not prove a state of such constant, and very uneasy restraint, as is very seldom compensated by any advantage, however specious, with which it may have been contemplated.

I am obliged to you for mentioning Mrs. Pulteney's acquisition; I must be very ungrateful, not to feel a very real joy in every addition of fortune she has. God grant her better health to enjoy it. It was very happy that no worse mischief was done by the riot at Brentford. We expected to hear of terrible doings, before the account in the newspapers, by a letter from London, from a person who saw Broughton in full march, at the head of his mob. The charge lies heavy upon Sir W. P——*, and if true, every unprejudiced friend to liberty and order, must wish for his rejection.

I must have done writing, and get ready to receive a party, between which, and that which

* Probably Sir William Beauchamp Proctor, candidate for the county of Middlesex against Serjeant Glynn.

you describe in Hill-street, there is no small difference; for I am engaged this afternoon with I know not how many vociferous fat gentlewomen, at penny quadrille. Not but that I could, with great tranquillity, make tea for them, and quietly withdraw my thoughts to a more amusing entertainment, than their comments on the black aces, *voles*, *sanprendres*, &c. &c. But, alas! it will be my woful destiny to entertain a beauty who does not play, but will expect me to be very attentive to her, while she makes most fearful counterfeit coinage of the current language of this land.

Adieu, my dear friend.

Ever yours, &c.

P. S. If nothing happens to prevent me, I mean to set out from hence on the 27th, spend a few days at Canterbury and Tunstal, and I hope to be in Clarges-street on the 3d of January.

LETTER CXIV.

Tunstal, *May* 26, 1769.

A THOUSAND thanks to you, my dear friend, for not disappointing my expectations of a let-

a letter. I hope I may certainly conclude, from what you say, that you are really better than worse, but it must be a much more decided amendment, that can set my heart at rest. I am glad you have given up the Northumberland scheme; I could not bear to have you ill so far out of my reach; most uncomfortable did I feel at leaving London, and I can find very little enjoyment of any thing I meet with in the country, till this weight is removed from my mind.

I had the happiness of finding the dear Penningtons' all well, thank God; and I made your godson very happy and important by your five guineas. I know not whether I have said too much about him, but I only do as you desired, and if you are tired, may throw it away like an idle book, if it does not amuse you.

I suppose Mrs. Vesey began her journey yesterday; poor soul, I grieve for her, at being obliged to set out for so long an absence without seeing you; but such are the *contretems* of this "worky-day" world. The Pitt family is at Malvern, Mr. and Mrs. Dunbar went to them on Wednesday, and proposed to stay a day or two with them. I feel a comfort in thinking that before this, their first sad meeting is over. I hope soon to have some account of them all. What must poor Mrs. Pitt's extreme tenderness

and weak health have suffered from such a trial! She attended the sweet boy to the last. Such struggles are too powerful for mere human strength to support, but, God be thanked, our friend has secured a more effectual aid.

I believe several people have guessed the real author of the Essay, to be Mrs. Vesey; but nobody ever named it to me but Mrs. Dunbar*; I did not own it, nor could I tell so egregious a lie, as to deny it, and indeed she was too positive to give me an opportunity; unless I had been a more hardened sinner than I hope I ever shall be. However, with her the secret is perfectly safe; but do not imagine it can possibly be concealed. I certainly rejoice, upon every account, in the justice which the world does to this fine piece of criticism, and very particularly as an established character will give an additional weight to whatever you produce on a more serious and important subject. There is no doubt great merit in every work that helps to polish the understanding, and give an innocent and improving amusement to the imagination; but it

* This is not very clearly expressed; but the meaning is, that only Mrs. Dunbar in direct terms expressed to Mrs. Carter her decided opinion that the Essay was written by Mrs. Montagu, though several had guessed that Mrs. Vesey was the author.

would give me infinite joy, to see such talents as your's more immediately consecrated to the honor and service of Him from whom you received them. God grant you long health and life, to derive every possible advantage which they are capable of bestowing on yourself in this world! And, if properly employed, an eternity of glory in that to come.

I am sure you will be so kindly attentive to my solicitude about your health, as to let me hear often from you; however short the letters may be, if they tell me that you are getting well, they will be a cordial to the heart of your truly affectionate.

LETTER CXV.

Deal, *June* 17, 1769.

I AM much obliged to you, my dear friend, for your kind letter, though it grieved me to think of it as an appendix to so much fatigue. Indeed I greatly fear that if you do not moderate the task of writing, especially now that your health has been so much shaken, you will bring back your fever again. I hope the weather will

soon

soon admit of your going to Sunning Hill, for I have much dependance on the waters for restoring your strength. I should think myself very happy in that share of your contemplations and social hours to which you so kindly invite me; but it really is not in my power to quit my post, so soon after I am returned to it.

Mr. Harris, I believe, being more of a philosopher than a poet, it is no great wonder that he objects to your not paying more profound reverence to the rules of Aristotle; and I being rather more of a poet than a philosopher, do exceedingly approve your paying no more attention to them than they deserve: Aristotle is, no doubt, very respectable from an amazing depth and precision of understanding; but it was unenlivened by a single ray of poetic genius, and utterly destitute of the colouring of imagination. Indeed, he seems to have been such a mere scientific being, as to discover very little symptom of any affections of the heart; and if, according to Mr. Locke's question, one could suppose, that to an iron poker could be superadded a faculty of thinking, that iron poker would be neither more nor less than an Aristotle. I am undone if you ever repeat this flippancy before any devotee of the Stagyrite. One would be tempted however to think, that, in some degree,

Mr.

Mr. Harris was not absolutely of a different opinion, from that turn which he gives to one passage in Aristotle's poetics, by which he represents him as declaring, that the end of tragedy is to eradicate the passions of terror and pity. I have often desired you to look upon this passage. Mr. Harris is so accurate a judge, both of the Greek language, and the Greek philosophy, that it ought to be with the utmost diffidence that I dissent from him; yet I cannot help suspecting, that his Stoical prejudices warped his judgment, and gave a twist to the meaning of the author in this place. Do pray consider it, and give me your opinion. It is in the 86th page of the first volume *.

I am very sorry for the terrible stroke to Mr. Burke's fortune. Indeed one has long had reason to be sorry, when he quitted the elegant and amiable studies in which he was so well qualified to shine, and the tranquil pleasures of select society, for the turbulent schemes of ambition, and the tricks of political life †. What do you town

* "Three Treatises," 2d edition.

† Mrs. Carter's opinion, then, concerning this celebrated statesman, and man of letters, appears to have been exactly similar to that of another eminent female writer, who is still living an ornament and a blessing to her country, whose whole

hear in town of the present state of affairs! The spirit of discontent seems diffused through the nation, and it is terrible to think on what may be the consequence. Heaven direct the K—— to repair the mischiefs that have arisen from the ill conduct, or the ignorance of his ministers, and to disappoint the machinations of faction.

I had a letter from our dear Sylph last night, dated on the 8th from Lucan; she seemed to be well, and had an extremely fine passage. But the winds which favoured her so much on the sea, gave her great perturbation on dry land, by changing, and thereby preventing the arrival of the pacquets, which she hoped would convey her some news of her friends in England. By this time, probably, she may have received a letter

whole time from her youth has been employed in the endeavour to do good.

"Here once Hortensius lov'd to sit
Apostate now from social wit:
Ah! why in wrangling senates waste
The noblest parts, the happiest taste?
Why democratic thunders wield,
And quit the Muses calmer field?
Taste thou the gentler joys they give;
With Horace*, and with Lelius† live."

Mrs. Hannah More's "Bas Bleu."

* Horace Walpole, afterwards Earl of Orford.

† Mr. afterwards Sir William Waller Pepys.

from

from me which will make her happy in an account of the removal of your fever.

My spirits are low and fluttering by the death of my poor aunt to-day. She had been long in a weak and uncertain state; but the last stroke was very sudden, and, I thank God, as easy as possible, without a pain or a struggle. It ought to be considered as a merciful release, before her life was grown totally uncomfortable, as it most probably would have been, if she had continued much longer, from losing her sight, of which there was great danger. Her having left this house, while I was in London, from the inconvenient situation of the rooms, has been a fortunate circumstance, as it has placed all the sad ceremonies of the last melancholy scene at a distance. I was afraid Mrs. Douglas would be greatly hurried by this event, as her nerves and spirits have been in a miserable state ever since she lay in. But Mr. D. has just called on me, and says she is better than he expected. She is now beginning to take the bark, which I hope will be of great service to her; and as soon as she is able to get out, she must change the air.

I had a letter this week from Mrs. Howe, who mentions the general applause given to the Essay by all whom she has heard name it; and adds, that

that nobody whom she has met with guesses at the author. How can the people be so dull.

I am glad you found so much reason to be pleased with your niece, and hope she will avail herself of her natural advantages, which, I agree with you, are the best calculated for happiness; though not so well adapted to a short triumph, as if they were more striking. I can tell nothing of your godson at present, but hope to receive a good account of them all soon, as Mr. and Mrs. Pennington were to return to Tunstal to-day. Only James went with them into Berkshire; and Thomas and Montagu were left to the care of an excellent good neighbour, who will be repaid as far as an infinite deal of conversation can go towards her amusement.

Adieu, my dear friend. I designed to have sent my letter by this day's post, but was prevented, so it must wait till to-morrow. I am ever,

Most faithfully, &c.

LETTER CXVI.

Deal, *July* 22, 1769.

EVERY post, since I concluded you returned to London, I have expected with great impatience, my dearest friend, to receive an account of your being arrived there; and the constant disappointment of my hopes has rendered me extremely uneasy, from the apprehension of your not being well, which is the more alarming from your having told me that the town is so unhealthy. A letter from Mrs. Pennington on Tuesday, informed me you set out a day later on your journey than you had mentioned to me, which I am glad I did not know sooner, as I comforted myself extremely, during the storm on Sunday, with the thought that your journey had ended the day before. I had a solitary contemplation of the whole progress of it, as I had sent my maids to Church, which I knew would be too hot and crowded in the afternoon for my head. I saw it from my window descending the hill, and spreading darkness and disorder all round it, till the whole landscape was lost in confusion. In a

a short

short time it reached this spot, and the impetuous fury of the wind raised the dust in such a manner as if the earth was tearing up by the roots. It thundered and lightened at the same time, but that was nothing compared to the whirlwind. The whole of it did not last above five or six minutes, I believe, including the violent rain in which it ended; and, as its duration was so short, it is probable the tempest might be local, and I hope did not reach you.

I have a thousand thanks to return you for your kind visit to us here, though it mortifies me, that the shortness of your stay would not allow me to render it more amusing to you, which I am sure it would have if you could have seen the environs of this place. I felt an inexpressible pleasure in the sight of you, which removed that uncomfortable feeling which had harassed my mind at leaving London without seeing you. I fear, indeed, the weakness and confusion of my poor wretched head, might have made me omit something or other for your accommodation; but you too well know the disposition of my heart not to excuse it. I went to my pillow as soon as you left us, and could not hold up from morning till night the two following days, and, indeed, have seldom been good for anything ever since,

since, so that I can make nothing of my solitude and leisure, but a mere repose.

The Penningtons' exprest themselves much obliged to you for so kindly giving them an opportunity of waiting on you, and I heartily thank you for it. Montagu deafened his father and mother all the way home in the vehemence of his eulogiums on you; and the next morning waked his brothers, by declaring "nobody is like her, "nobody is like her." What an early discernment the monkey has. Alas, my heart sinks within me while I am writing this, from having just read an article in the papers relating to sweet William Boscawen. I would fain persuade myself to hope that news is so often false, that possibly this may not be true. If it is, God support and comfort his poor mother under such a stroke!

Mrs. Primrose and Mrs. Underdown are expected home to-morrow, my father and Mrs. Douglas on to-morrow se'nnight, or the beginning of the week after. We are to have company from London about that time; but I believe they will make but a short stay; and, as soon as they are gone, if it please God my father is tolerably well, I am at your service to attend you at Sunning Hill. But I can think on nothing with pleasure till I hear from you, and my heart

heart is at ease by the knowledge that it is not ill health which has prevented your writing. Adieu, my dearest friend, I am ever,

Most faithfully, &c.

LETTER CXVII.

Deal, *July* 26, 1769.

I HAD writ to you, my dear friend, on the day before I received your first letter, but, by the second which I had the pleasure of receiving from you last night, I believe, mine had not then reached you, as it would have informed you of the situation of my affairs here, and that it will be scarce possible for me to set out next week. Mr. Douglas was at Woodchurch yesterday; and my father and Mrs. Douglas, I believe, do not return home till Wednesday. But what keeps me from being able to fix exactly on the time of my journey, is the not having heard certainly when our company from London propose to come, or how long they will stay. The engagement was made before I left town; and, as they are relations of my aunt, with whom we live on very

very friendly terms, I cannot possibly leave Deal just as they come. I am the more particularly desirous of showing them any civility in my power, as my uncle was very fond of them, and would, if he knew it, be pleased with a continuance of good will between the families. He is dead; but the obligations I had to him ought always to preserve my regard and gratitude to his memory alive. Nothing but this engagement should have prevented my setting out in a day or two after my father's return, for, indeed, I am very impatient to get to you. While I thought there was no probability of my coming to you to Sunning Hill, I never considered whether it would be agreeable to me or not; but now I shall set out *con amore*, and with great pleasure anticipate the schemes which you so kindly propose our enjoying together. The wretched situation of my health will sometimes come across the delightful hopes that I form in being with you, but I never suffer myself to dwell on it; but am rather willing to believe that the waters may do me good. My thoughts are in perfect sympathy with yours, on the joy of our running wild together in Windsor Forest, and in transporting ourselves back to the scenes of other times, while we are sauntering through the solemn apartments of the castle.

It is a great comfort to me to hear that poor Mrs. Boscawen supports her heavy misfortune with so much resignation; may the Duchess of B* be enabled to bear her's with the like composure.

Mrs. Primrose and Mrs. Underdown are returned to Deal; and Mrs. U. bids me tell you that she thinks herself very unfortunate in not having got a sight of you while you were in Kent. Mr. Douglas goes to Canterbury to-morrow, and, as it is possible Mrs. Vernon and Miss Yardley may be there, I hope to get some intelligence when they propose to come to Deal, and how long they will stay. As soon as ever I can fix on a time for my setting out, I will write to you immediately. I am much obliged to you for the offer of a bed in Hill-street, which I will gladly accept. I am glad little Matt. is to stay with his uncle, as his prattle will be great amusement to him. Adieu, my dearest friend, I must go dress myself for a visit to which I have no kind of natural appetite, but as a mere *devoir*. Be so good to give my very affectionate love to Mrs. Dunbar when you see her. I have not heard from her this age. I am,

Most faithfully, &c.

* Probably the Duchess of Beaufort, Mrs. Boscawen's daughter.

LETTER CXVIII.

Hill-street, *Aug.* 7, 1769.

Here I am, my dearest friend, regretting your absence, but comforting myself with the hope of meeting you on Thursday. I received your letter on my arrival here, and have communicated your directions to Israel; and in order that I may be sure, so far as depends on me, to meet you at Belfont, by two o'clock on Thursday, shall so calculate the matter with the driver, as for him to set me down there at one; and he may disport himself, and his horses, till Mrs. Scott has a demand upon them. While I indulge myself under some green tree in thinking of you, and the happiness which awaits me, till you arrive.

As I feared the coming from Deal in one day might be more fatigue than either I or my head could bear, I sat out yesterday early enough to get to Canterbury by nine o'clock in the morning, so as neither to prevent myself nor my driver from going to church. I dined with my good old friend Mrs. Lynch; and after evening prayers, set out with an intention of passing the

night at Tunstal, but met dear Mrs. Pennington on the road going to Canterbury. She would have turned back with me, but I would not allow it, but pursued my journey to Rochester, though not without feeling a very strong pull at my heart, on passing the turning to Tunstal, without going to see my nephews: it seemed quite unnatural, and saddened my way to Rochester, where I did not arrive till it was quite dark. This morning I arrived safely here before one, but I cannot tell you how dreary every room looks without you. I intend to dine with Mrs. Borgrave, and in the evening take a nice walk. I hope the difference of motion will get the whirl of the post-chaise out of my head, and set me soundly to sleep.

Israel hears the usual report of "as well as can be expected" to your enquiries. He heard at Mrs. Boscawen's that she was gone to the Duchess *. I was in hopes, that in her retired situation, the knowledge of this unhappy accident might have been concealed, till the poor Duchess was out of danger. Yet perhaps this sad variety of misfortune may have its use, in preventing her thoughts from totally fixing on one subject.

* Of Beaufort, her daughter.

I propose

I propose to set out for Richmond to-morrow, that I may get a sight of my dear Miss Talbot, from whom I have received but very indifferent accounts. I shall return at night, in order for my city business on Wednesday. I should have had more time with my friends there, to have gone, after my business in the city, and staid all night, when the chaise might have taken me up on Thursday morning, but as Israel could give no very clear account of the situation of Richmond, with respect to Belfont, I thought it better for fear of making any blunders, and being beyond the hour you have named, to proceed directly from town on Thursday.

Mrs. Howe is expected in town to-morrow, so that I hope I shall get a sight of her: it cannot be more, for my time is fully disposed of. Adieu, my dearest friend; my kind compliments to Mrs. Scott. I am sure I need not tell you how impatiently I long to get to you, nor the delight the thoughts of it gives me, being yours, &c.

LETTER CXIX.

Hill-street, *October* 1, 1769.

HERE I am, my dear friend, so far advanced on my journey, and am happy to hear that you are prosperously arrived to the end of your's. I came from Richmond this morning, and left Miss Talbot, I hope, in a better way, than when I last saw her. She is, alas! at best, in so helpless and suffering a state, as deeply affects me; and yet I cannot but hope, she will struggle through it, as she has no consumptive symptoms, and her incapacity of walking arises from the pain and debility in her limbs, not from weakness, belonging to her general constitution. She sleeps tolerably well, and takes as much nourishment as one could wish, and though not with appetite, neither is it with aversion. Her eyes look clear and lively, and her hair, which came off last year after her illness so much, as to leave many bald places on her head, is now grown thick and strong, and has in a good degree recovered its colour, which I should hope was a very promising sign. The chief thing which alarms me is her being so terribly fallen away. She rises about

about ten o'clock, and sits up till six, then lies down on a couch till towards eight, and gets a little nap, and after that sits up till ten. I mention all these circumstances, as you bid me be very particular. The patience and cheerfulness with which she supports so many many months of pain and languor, and the divine composure of her mind, with regard to the event, is beyond description, and are the fullest proof of what Christian piety and hope can do for those who truly believe and trust, where trust is never disappointed. Poor Mrs. Talbot's spirits rise and fall, with every variety of Miss Talbot's health; yet notwithstanding the constant agitation of her mind, she is, I thank God, perfectly well; a blessing of the utmost consequence to my poor friend, and most particularly so in her present situation.

After sinking my spirits, by dwelling on this affecting subject, I will endeavour to raise them, by reflecting on the happiness I enjoy by seeing you arrived, to the comfortable prospect of less precarious health, than a few weeks ago I could have allowed myself to hope. Let me, my dear friend, most earnestly intreat you to guard against the temptation of returning spirits and activity, and not suffer them to hurry you into that close application to study or business, which, till your constitution is more perfectly strengthened, would

too

too probably undo all the good you have received at Sunning-hill. It is certainly very difficult, to the vivacity of a mind like your's, ever to be at rest, while it feels itself in possession of the powers of action; but pray consider that these powers are very dangerous edged tools, and are to be used with the utmost caution, in a constitution like your's. Your submitting to the task of being idle (and to you, I well know, a grievous task it is) before you are too much tired, to be incapable of exertion, might, now your health seems disposed to take a favorable turn, perfectly establish it by another year. The straining it, before it is in some degree settled, may deprive you both of all power of application, and deaden every enjoyment for the remainder of your life. Nor can you shew a higher sense of your gratitude to that kind and merciful Power, who has thus blessed you with renovated health, than by taking a proper care of it. I am certain this reason will operate on your mind, whether my entreaties do or not.

I have a thousand thanks to make you for the happiness I enjoyed with you at Sunning. I know not how lasting its effects may be on my health, but I am secure of the happiness of having passed so many weeks in conversing with you, much to my advantage, pleasure, and supreme satis-

satisfaction *. What would I have given in my solitary drive to Richmond, for a view of that half face with which I have so often quarrelled, when I thought myself entitled to the whole, and yet whether you chose to travel the same road or not, I certainly carried you all the way with me.

Se ben non veggor gli occhi cio che vede
Ogni ora il core ———

I had a thousand thanks to make you, and a thousand things to say to you, which I was obliged to leave unsaid. It was with the utmost difficulty I prevailed on myself not to turn back again, before I got down stairs. And I wished to turn back again every step of the way I went, but I felt that my path laid straight forward, and that I must pursue it: my heart was divided between the friend I had left, and the dear sufferer I was going to see, and to whom I hoped my presence might bring some comfort: that thought reconciled me to our separation, which thank God is not for long, I hope and trust. I have still got the nosegay you gave me at parting, and

* ——— ——— Ille potens sui
Lætusque deget, cui licet in diem
Dixisse vixi ———
——— Non tamen irritum
Quodcunque retro est efficiet. Hor.

I con-

I contented myself with kissing the roses and myrtles because they had belonged to you, and by this pleasure solaced myself, to the great surprize of John, who, I dare say, often wondered what charm the flowers possessed. Where are you now? and what are you about? pray write soon, and let me know all about you, for I am very anxious. I hope you have not been the worse for the approach of this doleful weather. I think I never recollect any thing equal to the damp heat of the air last night. I several times put my head out of doors, to observe it, as an extraordinary curiosity. It was, I believe, to the full, as hot as the steams from the fountain of Bourschet. Tuesday was a tolerable day, and Mrs. Talbot and I took an airing. I could not help being struck by the difference of that country, from what I had just left. In the environs of Windsor, all was great, and solemn, and sublime; the views from Richmond-hill are the very perfection of the *riant* and the beautiful. The scenes of Windsor are admirably calculated, by their grandeur, to sober the flutterings of the mind, when it is disposed to be too volatile and gay; and the sweet smiling cheerful landscape of Richmond to cheer the spirits when they are clouded and depressed.

Molly desires me to tell you, Mr. Stuart has been

been here two or three times since you went away; but he is at present fairly driven away by the workmen, and she, poor soul, groans and laments herself most terribly at the dirt they make. I am glad to hear you got home in such good time. Captain Hood saw me set off, and would fain have convinced me of the absurdity of not taking the shortest road. But I felt not the least inclination to quit the turnpike, besides it seemed likely to rain, and in crossing the ferry I might have rendered my only gown unfit for wearing. Now however suitably one might run wild in a state of nature over Bagshot-heath, such a proceeding might have been deemed indecorous by the civilized and well-dressed gentry of such a populous town as Richmond.

I saw Miss Finch yesterday; she looked in high beauty; Lord Winchelsea, to their great comfort, is quite well. Miss Kitty Cambridge, poor thing, has got a nervous fever. I would have called on them, but was afraid of doing too much, as my head was not inclined to be very good, and I was afraid I should render myself incapable of being any little amusement to Mrs. Talbot. I came to town early to-day, thinking there might be some commissions from home for me to do, but to my great comfort there are not any, for it has rained incessantly. I have not attempted to stir out. I

hope

hope to get to Tunstal to-morrow, to see my dear sister and the boys; and on Saturday I hope to reach home, where I expect to find a letter from you, my dearest friend.

LETTER CXX.

Deal, *October* 3, 1769.

Your letter, which reached me soon after my arrival here, made me very happy, my dearest friend, by so comfortable an account of your health. It was the best cordial that could be applied to cheer my spirits, when I found myself set down at such a distance from you, after having been for so many weeks accustomed to the possibility of seeing you every hour.

Israel and Mary as usual took great care of me. He had a very bad cold, and I fear it cannot be mended, as he had got wet through in the city that dismal day when I was in town. The sun shone gaily on my journey the next morning, and the weather was extremely pleasant both days. I got to Tunstal before dinner was over, and found them all by dint of bark tolerably well, though Montagu's ague makes him look pale.

pale. He is mighty notable with a watch which has been purchased with your kind present to him. I had the happiness, I thank God, of finding all my friends here very well. I never saw my father look better, and Mrs. Douglas has in great degree lost her nervous complaints.

I hope you will still persevere in the laudable practice of putting a walk between each letter which you find yourself obliged to write, by which I am persuaded you will upon the whole lose no time, for it is too probable that uninterrupted application would bring back all your disorders, and render you incapable of any application at all.

I have not seen Mr. G.'s apology. I am glad to find, for his own sake, that he does justice to the Essay. I perfectly agree with you that a modest apology ought to soften the asperity of the critics, and indeed if he had made no such apology, it seems to be an unnecessary and ill-natured task to scrutinize the defects of a piece which might be produced more from the occasion than from any design of a display of talents in the writer. The most exceptionable part of the Ode *, so far as I recollect it, is that which pos-

* The Editor does not know who Mr. G. was, nor is he acquainted with the Ode here alluded to; but he entirely coincides in opinion with his venerable relation concerning the expression to which she objects.

sibly

sibly the critics may not censure. "The God of our Idolatry" is a horrid expression, and very nearly approaching to blasphemy. I do not believe Mr. G. meant it as such, perhaps he did not very clearly know what he meant, but the playing with such expressions is a shocking abuse of words. Perhaps Mr. G. might be able to quote too many examples of the same kind of levity in too many other writers; but no examples can justify a wrong practice: and words of sacred import ought never to be applied but to the subject to which they are strictly appropriated. If this was universally observed, they would never be uttered or received without an impression of that awe which would fix the strongest guard on the mind.

When I was in town, I wrote to Mrs. Howe to beg she would commission somebody to give me an account of her, as I was going out of the reach of any other information. She has kindly answered my letter herself, and gives me the satisfaction of knowing that her health has not been injured, except from some degree of nervous complaints. She is at present in town, which I am sorry for, as she thinks the air of the country did her good. But perhaps the being obliged to exert herself in business, may be a useful variety to her: she inquires kindly after your health, of which I propose to inform her very soon.

I have

I have had a quiet solitary afternoon, which has indulged me in full leisure to attend to the distance between us, and to feel that I cannot now on one side of a door ask how you do, nor hear you on the other kindly invite me to come in. However one must submit to these separations, which are unavoidable in a world of so many interfering engagements; and when one can look backward with tenderness and pleasure, and forward with reasonable hope, the intermediate time ought to be passed in cheerful conformity to the general condition of all mortal enjoyments.

I am so apprehensive of the pernicious effects of writing on your health, that I most earnestly intreat you never to send me a long letter. If you can but let me know you are well, and sometimes think on me, it will be the most important intelligence you can convey. I have not heard from Miss T. since I wrote to you last. Adieu, my dear friend. I am ever,

Most faithfully, &c.

LETTER CXXI.

Deal, *October* 12, 1769.

A THOUSAND thanks, to you my dearest friend, for making me happy by such a delightful account of your health, and of the method which you take to continue it. Though I have all imaginable partiality for the pretty, little, innocent amusements which you propose, I am rather scandalized that, when you were thinking over so many harmless divertisements, you did not wish for me, who, I think, could answer all manner of quiet pastimes, and entertain you with such pretty kind of talk, as would be in no case such an exercise of your understanding, as could at all injure your health.

I had a note last night from Miss Talbot, to tell me that she thinks she is mending, though, I fear, by almost imperceptible degrees; but I am thankful for any alteration for the better. She mentions your kind present to her, and longs to thank you, but seemed fearful she could not write, which is painful to her, and, I believe, wished me to make her excuses to you.

I am sure you will grieve to hear of the dangerous state of Lord Winchelsea's health, poor

Lady

Lady Charlotte Finch's virtues have had many a severe trial to encounter; but, I trust, she will always find a support proportioned to them. When I was at Richmond Miss Finch told me her brother was pretty well, except some kind of languor. Since that time his illness has proceeded with such astonishing rapidity, that his friends are under the most melancholy apprehensions. The symptoms are very alarming; and the family constitution renders them more so. I believe this young man discovered every disposition that could glad the heart of such a parent as Lady Charlotte, and his loss, if it pleases God to remove him, will be attended by every aggravating circumstance, that great advantages of external situation can give it. I had, on Saturday night, a short, but very affecting letter from Miss Finch, to tell me they were to set out for Nice the next day. Her own affliction, on the account of the danger of a brother whom she most tenderly loves, seems to yield to the solicitude she is under for Lady Charlotte. They are both most deeply distrest; but both, I find, express the most perfect resignation to the Divine Will.

To day gives one some prospect of a change of this direful weather which has continued ever since I came home. I have but twice been able to take a short walk; but as soon as the ways

are passable, I design to travel over hill and dale, as far as my feet can carry me. I have feared that this miserable damp would render Sandleford dangerous to you; but am rejoiced to find you can treat a cold *de haut en bas*.

Mr. Penn is greatly mended since we saw Miss Penn and Miss Treame. He swallows solids very well, uses great exercise without fatigue, feels more refreshed by sleep, and walks nearly as well as ever; so, I think, there is reason to hope, that the blessing of this good man's life may be still continued to his family.

Fly as far as you will, my dear friend, into the regions of imagination, and I will engage to meet you half way. I perfectly subscribe to your scheme, and will very readily leave all common topics, and all common sense, to the dull mortals who are plodding below, as mere useless incumbrances in our etherial excursions; there is no manner of danger but we shall easily recover them, when we drop again into this thick atmosphere, and return, as return we must, to the ordinary transactions of vulgar terrestrial life. We might have been most nobly sublime, and incomprehensible to all but each other, if you would have flown to me this afternoon, and shared my solitary tea; and, after your imagination by the influence of this ethereal nectar, had taken a sufficient

sufficient excursion, you might have returned back to Sandleford, and reposed it by soberly reasoning over your mutton broth. To mere reason, indeed, it is very necessary that, after all our flights, we should descend, not only as it is a good useful drudge in the business of common life, but a remedy against our pride. Reason serves to demonstrate the present narrow state of the human mind, while imagination elevates us by a confused discovery of its future greatness.

I am in some pain about the effect which you may feel from this severely cold wind; but, I hope, however, you cannot find it by many degrees so cold as we do on this unsheltered coast, for my own part I am in perfect charity with all weather that is neither damp nor frosty; notwithstanding that this violent, howling wind has frighted away all the autumnal beauties from my walks, and is so outrageous that I can make but short excursions.

I wish the Duchess of B. could have seen you before she set out, as I fancy it must have been some comfort to her. I agree with you in heartily pitying her situation, and friendless state. Those, who are strongly marked by external advantages, should be early taught that they cannot always subsist on mere representation; and that there are many occasions, in which the

possessors of riches, learning, or greatness, will be far from finding the consolations which they most need, in a reflection that they are rich, or learned, or great. The various accidents of life must often rob the mind of all its resources in artificial distinctions, and strip it to the natural feelings of unsophisticated humanity. In this forlorn and helpless state, which so much needs the consoling tenderness of personal attachment, the offices of friendship will be ill supplied to those unhappy sufferers, whose misguided aim has been rather to exact admiration and homage, than to conciliate love; and they will be obliged to content themselves with the cold tribute of general compassion, instead of finding their sufferings soothed and alleviated by the affectionate participation of an appropriated heart *.

I have read only a few of Mr. Shenstone's letters, and they rendered me melancholy, from nearly the same impressions as they made on you. Poor man he was in a lamentable situation, if his social affections were confined merely to his

* This whole sentiment seems expressed with singular and curious felicity of language. And many of this distinguished class of society, have probably "closed their long glories "with a sigh," from the causes here so ably unfolded, without knowing precisely to what their vexation and disappointment were to be attributed.

brother

brother authors, as such connections formed on sameness of profession, are to be considered rather as leagues, than as friendships; and people may be strongly united in a common cause, while they feel very little kindness or comfort as individuals.

Notwithstanding your reproaches and suspicions, I shall really honor you as an author, as I honor you as the owner of a coal mine, if, as you make use of the opportunities which the one affords you, of assisting the wants of the little world, you employ all the additional weight and illustricity which your example will acquire from the other, in assisting the wants of the great world. Wealth, genius, and reputation, are all equally transformable into virtue, and, by this process, the volatile advantage of *glory and honor* is fixed by the stamp of *immortality* *.

Adieu, my dearest friend, I am,

Most faithfully, &c.

P. S. Do you know any thing of our graceless Sylph.

* See Romans ii. 7.

LETTER CXXII.

Deal, *November* 1, 176[illegible].

THOUGH I am very little capable, my dear friend, of thanking you as I ought for your letter, yet I cannot help writing, as you will be kindly solicitous about me, if you happen to have heard that my dear Miss Talbot is past all hope of recovery. In the last letter which I had from herself about a fortnight since, she told me she was mending, and had, since I left Richmond, been thrice carried down stairs, and was getting again into the great room. I heard nothing from that time till last night, when I received a letter from Dr. Berkley * with the sad news, that she had been confined to her bed ever since last Thursday, and that the physicians gave

* Son to the Bishop of Cloyne, so distinguished by Pope, who attributed to him "every virtue under heaven." Dr. Berkley was a Prebend of Canterbury; an amiable man, simple, virtuous, and primitive. He once dined at the house of a gentleman in East Kent, with a well known eccentric Bishop of the sister Island. The Bishop drank a bottle of Madeira with his dinner, and "swore like a gentleman," the Prebend talked divinity, and drank nothing but water.

not

not the least hope that she could live above a day or two longer; so that, by the next post, I am in the most painful expectation of hearing that all hope is absolutely over. To herself this event will be a blessed change from a state of long and constant suffering to that distinguished degree of happiness which her uncommon goodness has infallibly secured *; but to the friends who were intimately acquainted with her virtues, the loss will be inconceivably great. Amidst all that I feel for myself on the removal of such a friend, I feel still more from what I suffer in thinking on the situation of Mrs. Talbot. Dr. Berkley tells me she is more composed than could be expected, and I trust she will be supported with a strength proportionable to this heavy trial. The Dr. and Mrs. Berkley, Mr. Talbot, and Mr. Ford are with her at Richmond. Most people when they arrive at Mrs. Talbot's age have their sensibilities extremely weakened; but her's, alas, are remarkably lively, and she will I fear feel this most calamitous affliction in its fullest extent.

* This is spoken in language rather stronger than Mrs. Carter's humility generally allowed her to speak, with reference to a *claim* to future happiness. But her mind was intent upon her friend, whose worth and innocence she knew, and, as she felt no doubt upon the subject, she expressed none.

Though the fear "of passing for a hypocrite may sometimes be a reason for the suppression of many pious thoughts" in a mixed company, it can scarcely, one would think, operate upon an intimate correspondence with particular friends; and, where religion is the leading principle of the mind, one knows not how to account for a total silence on a subject in which there is so strong and mutual an interest; at least, I am sure, there is no friendship worth cultivating where there is not the common tie *.

I am obliged to you for Mr. Wodehouse's verses. They are pretty; but do not please me so well, so far as I recollect, as the others which he made on the same subject; but very possibly my judgment may not be right.

I am heartily glad you have writ to poor Mrs. Boscawen, which I hope will be a comfort to her now, however inattentive the first shock of her grief might have rendered her to the sympathy of her friends.

I am extremely obliged to you, my dear friend,

* Probably this was in reply to some observation of Mrs. Montagu, which does not appear. Mrs. Carter often expressed her opinion upon this important subject in the same manner; and, indeed, they *who walk in the house of God as friends*, must, of course, frequently speak of *the things pertaining to the kingdom of God*.

for

for your kind and particular intelligence. It is a very great comfort to me, to hear that my dear Miss Talbot is at present in a state of tolerable ease. For this I am heartily thankful, and to Almighty God I resign myself for the rest, without suffering my mind to wander beyond the present favorable appearance; at least, I will strive to put all the check on it in my power, and, by that means, the weight on my spirits will be greatly lightened by this temporary relief, if, alas! it should prove no more.

I grieve to hear of poor Mrs. Boscawen's melancholy state of mind; yet, I hope, it is not irrecoverable. She must have many and strong attachments to the children which are left her, which in time will operate sufficiently to withdraw her from a constant attention to what she has lost, and may procure her much comfort and cheerfulness, though the vivid spirit of joy may be flown after such a shock. I think Miss Boscawen's present situation must be very pitiable. It was very kind in you to procure her the amusement of so pretty a *spectacle*. My brother and sister saw it when they were in town, and were extremely charmed with it. It must be confest that *your* curiosity to see it must have been a very natural temptation; so, on this subject, I forbear chiding. But remember, and it shall not be my

fault

fault if you forget it, that you promised me, as all the hamadryads of Windsor Forest can witness, that you would guard against all heat, crowds, &c. and, in spite of all the vanities of London, make a principal object of your health.

The Penningtons' left us on Friday, but their eldest boy stays behind, as my father has undertaken to teach him arithmetic; the care of his latin is devolved upon me. He is very quick; and, if his genius had not been restrained, poor child, by such a series of miserable ill health, he would have been, I believe, a very remarkable scholar; under all his disadvantages he construes Virgil very prettily *.

I think, considering your reluctance to get up for the comet, you are scarcely worthy to hear of any celestial phænomenon, if I had not a need to tell it: I this morning saw a most extraordinary rainbow, as it was only a single colour. The sun was scarcely got above the sea; his orb was not visible, but concealed by a strong golden cloud, which formed a very perfect arch in the

* He died, as has been mentioned in a former note, at the age of twenty-one; having passed through the University with a character remarkably good, both for morals and learning. With health so unusually delicate, it was always surprising how he could find either time or inclination for study.

west,

west, of a pale orange colour, extremely distinct. The appearance was very singular, and I thought myself in high luck to get a sight of it, for it did not last above two or three minutes, and vanished as soon as the sun had shaken off the clouds, and shone out in full splendor.

It was not from Mrs. Berkley but from Mrs. Jeffrey's that I received an account of Miss Talbot, and she spoke with the utmost astonishment of her amendment in every respect, since she left Richmond.

I beg my affectionate compliments to Mrs. Scott. Adieu, my dearest friend.

Ever yours, &c.

LETTER CXXIII.

Deal, December 1, 1769.

I AM greatly obliged to you, my dear friend, for the comfortable account of Miss Talbot, which you were so good to send me, which is a very great relief to my mind, though I have been so strongly guarded against relying upon favorable symptoms, that I dare not indulge all the hope which they would otherwise give me.

You

You have never told me what was your poor little nephew's illness; however, I am very glad, whatever it might be, that he is so much better. My nephew goes on very well, and, I thank God, has at present no appearance of his sad painful disorders, nor any return of his ague. If the poor child's health gains any advantage from his being here, I shall very gladly go through the trouble and confinement, to which my attention to his learning obliges me, as I am unwilling he should lose any thing in this respect after so many interruptions, as have unavoidably checked his progress from his miserable health.

I have not heard from any of the family that Mr. Dunbar has parted from Fern Hill, though it may very probably be true as he seemed very wavering in his schemes about it. I shall be very sorry if it is so, that it has slipt through the fingers which I should have wished to lay hold on it.

I am not absolutely of your opinion, that the preference given to the men in the instances you mention is a disgrace to us, as I rather think it a disgrace to them to condescend to such occupations as render that strength and activity in which they have indisputably the advantage, utterly useless. But indeed this misapplication of employment has very serious ill effects on society. If the strength which lies dormant at the trifling occu-

occupations of the thimble and the loom was exerted to subdue the stubborn soil, our country would not be disgraced by such tracts of uncultivated land, and the poor women might be rescued from want and absolute idleness by finding employment proportioned to their strength. Besides all combinations are of mischievous tendency, and the great numbers of idle men whom sedentary manufactures collect into towns, are perpetually disturbing the public peace by riots and insurrections. No such evil would arise from the natural successors of Minerva, who content themselves to evaporate their ill humours, merely by an exertion of their eloquence.

I have too good an opinion of my friend Mr. C. Fielding's taste, not to be fully persuaded that he would think himself exceedingly obliged to any one that could make good the assertion and affirmation which you mention. But, indeed, however strongly you may have heard his marrying Miss F. asserted and affirmed by others, I believe he has no such hopes himself*. I am sorry for the report, which may have awkward and unpleasant consequences: but as she will be

* The marriage however took place, as it is obvious that the passage alludes to the late Captain Fielding, of the royal navy, and Miss Finch, eldest daughter of the late Lady Charlotte Finch, and sister to the Earl of Winchelsea.

long

long absent, it will probably be suspended, and by the time she returns may be forgot; whenever she does marry, she will be very happy I believe, if she meets with a man of equal merit to her own.

I will certainly look over the Essay * before I come to town, though I have been too ill and too dispirited to apply to any thing for some weeks past, and I scarcely ever recollect my leading so absolutely idle a life. I believe I told you how much the Douglas's were charmed with it; they kept it such an unmerciful time, that I could not get it out of their hands for Mrs. Pennington to finish it before she left Deal. She was greatly pleased with what she read of it; and has sent me a thorough chiding, from having heard since she went, the name of the author; and holds it very monstrous and unsisterly, that when I heard her so strongly commend it, I would not give her the pleasure of hearing by whom it was written. Indeed it seems to me to be downright affectation to conceal it any longer, though I have not yet

* On Shakespear, by Mrs. Montagu. This, as well as several other passages in these letters in which it is mentioned, must convince every unprejudiced mind, that Mrs. Carter had no claim whatever to the merit of that celebrated work. She was, indeed, always vexed whenever it was attributed to her, and denied it in the strongest terms.

ven-

ventured to own it, though I have not denied it. It gives me great pleasure that it was at first a secret, as it helped you to that unprejudiced applause of the work, which it might have been difficult to separate from a regard to the author. But now I think one may lawfully speak out.

Adieu, my dear friend, ever yours, &c.

LETTER CXXIV.

Deal, *December* 19, 1769.

It seems to me a long time, my dear friend, since I heard from you. I do not find there is any reason from the family to think Mr. Dunbar designs to quit F. House. However, as human resolutions are often uncertain things, it is not impossible that he may. But as there does not seem any such design just now, you will have time to take what measures you judge proper to secure a chance, if it ever should happen. Poor man, I hear he is alarmed about his son who is not well.

Lady Charlotte Finch's family is settled in an agreeable house at Nice, and they have the comfort of seeing Lord Winchelsea's health every day

day improving. Miss Finch has seen original pictures of all the Sevigné family, of which she sends me some anecdotes.

I have just seen Douglas, who tells me he had a letter last night from his brother, and that you have effected more in the short time he was with you than he himself had been able to do with all his arguments, and have rendered him quiet and easy under his disappointments. I am heartily glad to hear this, for Mr. Douglas was excessively uneasy at his project of going to the Grenades, which he was persuaded would very shortly kill him. He is expected home to-morrow or next day, and I hope to receive a full account of you from him.

I am much obliged to you for your account of our friends. I hope now soon to join the society. I propose to spend two or three days with Mrs. Pennington in my way, and to be in town at farthest by new year's day, if not rather sooner, to take possession of my spacious palace at Mrs. Norman's. It is a comfort to me not to leave my father till after the beginning of days, which do not bring on winter, but spring; a circumstance which to people who pass the whole year in the country, is a very considerable object of cheerfulness. The winter has hitherto, for the most part, been very calm and sober; but to-day it is great

great and sublime. I sit now listening to the awful concert of howling winds and dashing waves, with some regret that my head will not suffer me to walk abroad and enjoy it still more completely.

I have been wishing for you this morning to "chase the ebbing Neptune," as I have been wandering along the sand on the sea-shore. I believe it would have been much better for your health, and more amusing to your imagination, to listen to the soft murmuring, and to contemplate the motion of the waves, which were most beautifully fringed and illuminated, than to write long letters of business to Newcastle, though it must be confest the advantages of your employment were rather more solid.

I had lately a charming letter from our Sylph, who I believe casts many a longing look across St. George's channel; but, alas, there is not the shadow of a hope that we shall see her this winter.

I am confined to muse and sip my solitary tea in my own room, and I should heartily wish for you, if I did not think it ten to one but you are more agreeably engaged. This being the case, I solace myself with the next best thing, my beloved silence, and "to Harpocrates consign the door." Not that I mean by this to give myself

any

any airs of importance, as if I was engaged in profound study; my solitude at present is much rather the indulgence of repose, than the exercise of wisdom; and for any thing I am able to do, I might be pretty near as well figuring with the gay flutterers at Almacks or Soho. My only superiority over them is a sad consciousness of my own weakness, which they perhaps may prudently avoid feeling, by not trying their strength. When I endeavour to think every thought is clouded by confusion, and sinks in languor. Under such circumstances one cannot help reflecting with transport on a machine so constituted as to answer every motion of the directing mind. But such an advantage would be a dangerous temptation in our present state. A perpetual capacity for the pleasures of merely intellectual life, would too much withdraw our attention from the duties incumbent on us, while we are children of the dust, and would weaken, if not totally destroy, all the sympathies of humanity *. Having

* How few there are whose minds, like Mrs. Carter's, even acquire strength from their infirmities, and make use of that weakness, partly animal, partly mental, which would to most persons be the highest mortification, as an incitement to the better fulfilling the humble and ordinary duties of social life. It is one of her highest praises, that she never allowed her incli-

ing writ myself into contentment under the trying circumstance of feeling myself good for nothing. I will wish you good night, and retire quietly to my pillow. However, on second thoughts, I will conclude my letter to-night, as I have a world of dining, and a world of business to go through next week. I begin to wish heartily that I was set out.

Adieu. I am so tired with my walk, that I am fit for nothing but to go to sleep; but I was not willing to omit writing another post. I am, my dear friend,

Ever faithfully, &c.

inclinations to interfere with her duties, and that she cheerfully, and without that condescension which is sometimes so humiliating to the parties to whom it is exerted, descended from the most sublime and engaging studies to all the common and trifling attentions which the general state of society requires. As it is said, that no man is a hero to his *valet de chambre*, so to her native town Mrs. Carter was not a woman of letters; and many persons saw her in company, who had no idea that her pleasures were of any higher order, than such as whist or quadrille could afford, or the society of a country town impart.

LETTER CXXV.

Deal, *June* 8, 1770.

I WAS very happy, my dear friend, that the terrible infection at Sandleford discovered itself before you was set out. The late bad weather will prevent your feeling much regret, as you could have received but very little benefit from the country. Your poor gentlewomen, indeed, must sorrowfully feel the want of their sunday gowns; and I can readily believe they would have run all hazards of infection to recover them, for one every day sees frequent instances of this strange degree of carelessness in servants. I do not mean this as a censure. They would no doubt have as strong a dread of danger as their principals, if they saw it in the same point of view; but most happily for them, in a class of life in which they are often exposed to particular hazards, they have such a total freedom from apprehension, as enables them to go through the duties of their situation, which would often be impracticable, if to the fatigues of present actual service, were added the harassing terrors of impending evils. One often hears them heavily

vily charged with negligence and carelessness with regard to their superiors; but surely all resentment on this account would be greatly softened by the consideration that they are just as careless and negligent in what relates to themselves; therefore not wilful perverseness, but mere innocent insensibility is the cause of both.

I begin to grow impatient for your setting out for the North, for the sooner you set out, the sooner you will return; I am always uncomfortable when you are at such a distance from me. I am glad your wild cousin is grown more sober and civil; and I hope he will continue so, and not add to the perplexities of your business, which I suppose without any such addition, are more than any ordinary head could disentangle in more months than the weeks you will bestow upon them.

Do you recollect Livy's description of Alba? If not, pray do get it, and look it over. I have lately been reading it, and was so much charmed with it, that I quite longed for you to share my admiration of it. I have set myself the task, of a regular course of Roman history, for one of my studies this summer. I do not, however, propose to purchase reading at the expence of exercise, as I look upon that as a regular duty, to be performed at all times when I am able. Adieu, my

dear friend, you do not mention your health, but from your description of your exploits, I hope I may infer that it is good; God keep it so, prays

Your most affectionate, &c.

LETTER CXXVI.

Deal, *July* 7, 1770.

My dear Friend,

It was not till last night I received your letter, dated from Ferry Bridge. In that which I had about ten days ago from Stratford, as you did not mention any thing of the time, in which you proposed to reach the end of your journey, I waited to hear from you again, as I thought it would be to no purpose for my poor letter to lie and catch cold in an *ellinge* * house before your arrival. I should indeed have been much alarmed if I had heard of your being taken ill on the road, and I rejoice that the disorder so soon allowed you to pursue your route without any material inconvenience.

* *Ellinge* is a provincial term, perhaps also to be met with in old ballads for "out of the way," or "lonesome."

I have

I have grieved for you and your fellow traveller during this miserable weather, which must have annihilated most of your prospects. But I am absolutely out of all charity with you, for not visiting Shakespear's tomb, which is such an unclassical omission, as is not to be tolerated, and if you were too much tired to walk, you should have been packed up in a basket, even if it had been fit for Datchet Mead. If Shakespear was not out of the reach of being affected by the fooleries of human passions, to be sure he would draw your "curtains at the dead of night" to revenge such an ungrateful disregard of his memory, after his having furnished a subject for the establishment of your fame.

The weather has been as cold and as deluging here, as you could possibly find it. This country, however, is so very soon dry enough for walking, that I have contrived to get out for a short excursion at least almost every day. Indeed, it is merely as a principle of health, for in such weather one can receive but little pleasure. There has been scarcely a single day that has given us any impression of summer. The brightest suns have felt cold and ungenial, and even the West winds have lost their balmy softness. It is not to be wondered at, that Lady Frances, who does not act according to the name, but the nature of things,

things, should continue the accommodations of winter, and keep snug in Brook-street, while the rest of the world are catching cold in the country by fancying that June and July must be summer *.

I had a letter a few days ago from Mrs. Dunbar, who is going to take a journey of five or six days into the South of Ireland, through pretty much such roads, I suppose, and with pretty much such accommodations, as are to be met with in Spain. However, I hope all this exercise and air will establish her health, and be of use to her spirits. Mrs. Pitt is very well, and cheerful at Encombe. Mrs. Vesey is greatly alarmed about Mrs. Hancock, who has got a very bad cold, which our poor friend has twisted into paralytick symptoms; but I hope this distemper has no better foundation than her own dozen apoplectick fits. The medical men do not apprehend any danger; God forbid there should be any, for Mrs. Hancock is a most valuable woman on her own account, and her life is of unspeakable consequence to dear Mrs. Vesey.

* The world is grown wiser now, at least the great world, and June and July have lost their place as summer months, and are degraded to spring, probably upon the same principle that winter does not begin till towards the end of January. As the mock physician says, in the French play of the situation of the heart and the liver, "*Nous avons changés tout cela.*"

Lady

Lady Holdernesse called on me last week, she has been for two or three days at Walmer castle, but does not return again this summer. Mademoiselle ——— was with her, who has at last prevailed on her sister to supply her care of Lady Emily D'Arcy's education. Though I am persuaded she will be treated very properly and kindly, I cannot help pitying the poor woman for her being teized away from her own quiet home, where she lives upon the produce *de ses terres*, and hauled over sea and land into a strange country, to have the care of a child for whom she can at present feel no affection, nor even inclination, and into a hurrying and new life.

Your letter is just come to hand, which gives me the pleasure of knowing you are safely arrived at the end of your long, and, I fear, uncomfortable journey. A few days rest will, I hope, repair all the mischief which you have received from agitation, and I shall hope soon to hear that you are quite well; I mean as well as people who consume all their portion of the general inheritance of human labour in the exercises of the mind, can ever expect to be in this worky day world. To wish you any more compleat health, would be to wish you in Paradise, or digging in one of your own coal mines. You would not much thank me for the one, and I am much too

selfish

selfish to be willing to consign you to the other. I rejoice that travelling agrees so well with Mrs. Chapone; I am a letter in her debt, will you be so good as to ask her, if I may enclose for her, to the Bishop of Winchester.

You are in great luck in finding a *mild November* in the North; for we find it as rigorous as in its most natural season. I have had the less reason to regret the bad weather for this last week, though we have had incessant rains, high winds, and so cold as to have constant fires, because I have necessarily been confined at home with my two new damsels, who, poor souls, must have run their noses against every door in this little intricate tenement, without knowing whither it would lead them, if I had not served them for a guide. They have now pretty well acquired a knowledge of the ways of the house; but how soon they may get acquainted with the odd ways of their mistress, I cannot tell. However, I hope in a few months they will have learnt their business, and I be freed from the trouble of teaching it. My being used to a servant remarkably clever, and who very soon took all fatigue from me, renders my present task the more wearisome; but it must be done, and if they happen to be good girls, as I hope and believe they are, they will amply repay me. It is very fit that

there

there should sometimes be occasions to prove by more feeling arguments than mere speculation, how very much those who are placed in the higher classes of life are indebted, for great part of their ease, their leisure, and their comforts, to those whose lot is fallen to them in the lower.

Are you not glad that the princely adulterer has been brought to the shame he too well deserves. The damages given seem to be very small for the quality of the offender; however, the disgrace may answer a better purpose. Vice is under all circumstances shocking to the good, but the people of the world, will be more likely to fear it, in proportion as it appears contemptible and ridiculous; and it can scarcely in any case of the like nature, appear more effectually so, than in the epistolary correspondence, and indeed in the whole process of this most scandalous affair, every part of which shocks one; though it is a proof of the goodness of our laws, that however high the offenders they can reach them: one must feel shocked that so many shameful and scandalous anecdotes were made public.

Adieu, my dear friend, ever yours.

LETTER CXXVII.

Deal, *July* 29, 1770.

If your "bower of bliss," my dear friend, is not "*a l'abri*" of external storms, the rain and wind of yesterday, must have made sad havock of its sweets. Indeed I could not help regretting there should be any interruption of your spirited enjoyment of the first delightful days of independent solitude, when the imagination, with such exquisite pleasure, runs wild through all the various beauties of creation, in its fairest form. Yet, alas! if the elements were to shed their kindest influences through the whole summer, if health and leisure were to continue unimpaired and unmolested, what would it avail, while a lurking principle of *ennui*, more powerful than all external opposition, would in a few days,

"Shade every flow'r, and darken ev'ry green,"

and sink all the raptures of enthusiastic enjoyment into insipidity and languor? The human mind, destined to the rough exercises of probationary life, is, from its very constitution, incapable

pable of a long indulgence of that happy indolence, on which you were inclined to make a panegyric, which ceases to be happy, when it becomes no longer necessary, as a relaxation from the fatigues of active exertion. And so, my dear friend, as soon as you have reposed yourself sufficiently after the bustle of your journey, by so literally sauntering in your garden, you will fly from the torpor of indolence to your farm, and your coal-pits, and your studies, and the garden, instead of the whole day, will only engage its own share. I very sensibly felt the kindness of your wishing me to partake your retirement; which, on your first transports, was certainly one of the highest instances of friendship that any one human creature could bestow on another. If my heart did not understand what you say about solitude and silence, I should be ashamed to own it belonged to me.

I had many kind enquiries after you from Lady Camden, who, with her Lord, and three Miss Pratts, is at Deal, and purposes to continue here some time. You may be sure, it never entered into my head to give her the trouble of a visit; nor had I the least idea that her Ladyship would honor me. But, in the midst of my security, when my father went to wait on Lord Camden, her Ladyship told him she should call upon me, and

and accordingly, very obligingly spent above an hour here this morning. *Entre nous*, for pray do not mention it, she gave a wretched account of the state of Mr. B——'s family, from his strange fretful temper and sordid covetousness. The poor girls are not allowed the common necessaries belonging to their situation, nor any opportunities of acquiring a proper behaviour. Lady Camden entirely acquitted Mrs. B—— of any share in this treatment, and spoke of her in a very kind manner. Surely it ought to render people of moderate fortunes, contented and cheerful with their lots, when they consider how often human perverseness prevents riches from becoming an instrument of happiness.

I am much obliged to you for the concern you express in a letter just received (this was begun yesterday) about my task with my damsels, they are very tractable, and will shortly be quite *au fait* of their business. I shall think myself happy if I can render their situation as comfortable as possible, for they have left all their natural friends, and have, poor girls, entrusted themselves entirely to my care *. I am sorry to hear, that

* Perhaps it may be hardly necessary to state here that Mrs. Carter always considered herself as a mother to her servants, and instructed, advised, and corrected them as such.

The

that your perplexities in much more important business, than my poor little *ménage*, are likely to be increased by the loss of so able an assistant; his imprudence, poor man, seems however to have done nothing more than precipitate the conclusion of an incurable disease.

I have had a letter from our poor dear Sylph, who has been excessively unhappy, from her apprehensions about Mrs. Hancock, and indeed the symptoms, to a person of her disposition, were sufficiently alarming. God be praised, this good woman appears, at present, to be perfectly recovered. Mrs. Vesey pathetically laments not hearing from you, but she comforts herself with concluding, that if you do not write to her, that you certainly are writing to benefit the world. I told her, in my answer, how very much you was engaged, and that must plead your excuse.

I beg my love to Mrs. Chapone. I will write to her soon, but just now, I am in a world of business and bustle, for we have company to dinner, and I am "Mungo here, Mungo there, and Mungo every where;" so it is well I began my letter last night. For between walking before

The consequence was that she hardly ever had a bad servant. They loved and respected her like a mother, and very rarely went from her service but to be married.

breakfast,

breakfast, presiding over the cookery, and paying a visit, as in duty bound, to Lady Camden, I have been as busy all the morning as if I had been actually doing a great deal; and there is moreover, a party hanging over me, for the afternoon, but I comfort myself with their betaking themselves to the black aces, and that, though I may be stifled with the heat, I may not be obliged to talk. Adieu, my dear friend.—Ever yours.

LETTER CXXVIII.

Deal, *August* 18, 1770.

It does indeed rejoice me, my dear friend, to have so comfortable an account of your health; yet I cannot help regretting that so much of it must be employed in the fatigues of business, that you will not have leisure for a complete enjoyment of this fine weather, and very fine weather is so transitory a good, in this our uncertain sky, that there is no great hope it will wait till you are more at leisure to attend to it. However, at all events, health and fine weather are two very good things, and give an animal

animal gaiety at least, to the dullest employments.

My love to Mrs. Chapone; and pray tell her I will shew Mrs. Munro's papers to Lord Dartrey, as soon as I have an opportunity; I have more than once mentioned her to him. His Lordship and Lady D. are expected daily, and they are probably by this time on their voyage to England. I had a letter from Miss Penn, in which she gives a very comfortable account of Mr. Penn's health; they are now at Tunbridge, and from thence go either to Brighton or Margate.

I endeavour to derive all the profit I can, from this most beautiful weather, though I have not yet been able to reach some of my most favorite walks. However, I have lately compassed one, by the help of some repose in sitting on the roots of some old trees, by the side of a spring, where I contemplated the ruins of an ancient seat *, once the abode of a flourishing family, and

* The seat here spoken of is Northbourn Court; formerly an appendage to St. Augustine's Abbey at Canterbury, and the summer residence of its abbots, and afterwards of the family of Sandys, baronets. Sir Edwin Sandys, the last of them, leaving only daughters, the property became so subdivided, that it became necessary to sell it, and to pull down the mansion. The beautiful reflections to which they have given rise, will perhaps stamp an additional value on the picturesque

and which I remember standing entire, but in melancholy dejected grandeur, from the desertions of its inhabitants. It contained a hundred rooms, many of them wainscoted with cedar, and very highly ornamented, particularly a gallery, in which I have often walked, with much Gothic delight. This noble structure might have subsisted for many generations in venerable decay; but the last heirs to the estate, for the sake of the materials, anticipated the depredations of time, and levelled it nearly to the ground. Such is the instability of mortal things; and so determined is that order of providence, which forbids any perpetual residence upon earth. The obnoxious strength and magnificence of imperial cities, and the less exposed and humbler abodes of private life, are equally subject to the general law, which is carried into execution by the very nature of man. Thus heaven directed the storms of ambition, to level the proud walls of Tyre; but the mere caprice of changing fancy, is a sufficient engine against the weaker establishments of domestic seats; and what constituted

picturesque and ivy-covered ruins which still remain; part of which have, with great taste, been admitted into the garden of H. P. Hannum, Esq. the present owner of the estate, whose more modern house is built at a small distance from the scite of the ancient mansion.

the

the pride and comfort of one generation, sink into nothing, merely from the contempt and neglect of the next *.

I have read Dr. Young's Poem, which is very sublime and very trifling, very bright and very obscure, very vivid and very dull; and, in short, made up of all those contradictions, which constitute his truly original character and genius, which certainly, upon the whole, deserves a very high degree of admiration and esteem. I am very glad to hear that Emin has at last gained his point, and wish him every success consistent with your better wishes for him.

You have probably seen by the papers that Lady Charlotte has brought Miss Finch to bathe in the sea, for the recovery of her health. I thank God, there is no appearance of danger in her case, as her disorder seems to be merely nervous. I think she hurt her constitution by the long fatiguing walks which she took when she was abroad. I believe I gave you an account of her expedition to the top of Mount Cahas. She has not yet been into the sea, but begins tomorrow; the air of this place has already done

* This may remind the reader of Pope's observation,

"And Hemsley, once proud Buckingham's delight,
Slides to a scriv'ner or a city knight."

her good, for she has slept perfectly well ever since she has been here, which was by no means the case before she left Kew. Lady Charlotte stays a few days longer to see the effect of her bathing, and then returns to Kew, leaving Miss Finch here. Such a parent as Lady Charlotte must be greatly alarmed at any attack on the health of such a child, but as she has visibly mended ever since she has been here, I hope her Ladyship will return to Kew in better spirits than she left it. I got as good a lodging as I could find for Miss Finch, and I am happy that we are able to supply Lady Charlotte with a quieter bed, during her stay here, than she could have got at an inn. They dine at Miss Finch's lodgings, and spend the rest of the day with us.

I had a letter to-day from Ireland, in which Mrs. Vesey was mentioned as being quite well, but not in spirits; by this account I should fear all alarm about good Mrs. Hancock is not over. Lord and Lady Dartrey are come to England, but I do not hear that our friends, the Dunbars, are yet preparing for their voyage. In winter, however, I hope we shall collect them all together. I trust that our dear Sylph's low spirits are not caused by any *remora* in her coming to England.

Mrs. Underdown is much yours, and a most

intemperate admirer of your Essay. She is downright violent in her encomiums, and half wild that she has forgot her French, so as to lose any part of your criticisms on Voltaire. All this family sincerely join in their best respects to you. I heartily wish you well through all your Newcastle business and your Newcastle dinners. I shall be most heartily glad and happy, when you are got once more within my reach, and ever far or near, yours sincerely, &c.

LETTER CXXIX.

Deal, *October* 3, 1770.

When I read the date of your letter, from such a formidable distance, it was a comfort to me, my dear friend, to reflect, that before it could reach me, you were approached a little more within my view; but, alas! I still look through a very long telescope to catch an imperfect sight of you. I shall be happy in your return to Hill-street, where I shall know where to take my aim, and where I can see you through an opera-glass.

I am one of the last persons to whom it would

be necessary for you to make an apology for not giving me a description of your travels, for I love people so much better than things, that I would much rather chuse that my friends should talk to me about themselves, than on any other subjects. I wrote to you the next post after I received your's from Edinburgh. I have not heard from Mrs. Pitt since she told me she had given direction for a proper enquiry to be made into the situation of our poor foundling; and if the account of her ill-treatment should prove to be true, had ordered her to be sent to Sunning Hill, to be put under the care of Mrs. Thistlethwaite, till it can be determined what to do with her.

I suppose you must have seen by the papers, the death of Dean Potter. It is said that he desired Mrs. Potter to accompany his corpse from Wrotham, where he died, to Canterbury, where he was to be buried, and likewise to attend his funeral. This must have been a severe task, surely, to this poor woman, who, I believe, loved him extremely, and I suppose must be particularly unequal to any such strong exertion of spirits, as it is not long since she had a paralytic attack.

It is not in my power, alas! to give you so prosperous an account of dear Miss Finch, as I could

could wish; but she is, thank God, better, and I hope time will do much for her; she is gone at present with Lady Charlotte and Lord Winchelsea into Rutlandshire, where business called them, and it was hoped this journey might do her good. Yet if I could have determined for her, from any thing except my own indulgence, I should have said she had better have staid here. I had full power to turn the balance, but indeed I found myself so incapable of judging which was most likely to do her good, that, as much as on my own account I wished her to stay, I could not, in conscience, interpose, for fear of fixing on the wrong choice in so doubtful a point.

I have this moment, my dear friend, received the delightful intelligence of your safe return to Denton, and that we are at least within the limits of the same island. I am happy at the recovery of your rest, the *sine qua non* of good health, and the best relief and suspension of bad. I hope the present fermentation among the coal-miners will end in the defeat of so wicked a project as that of starving people, merely because they are not rich, as well as in the improvement of your property.

Never was there a more beautiful autumnal season than we have had, ever since the equinoctial storm. I longed to enjoy this peace of the

the elements, and its delightful effects upon the country views. But my enjoyment has been confined to what I could discover from my window, as I have for this last ten days been too ill to walk, or almost to do any thing, (and this must account for this letter having been begun these four days,) I regret the loss of this fine season, as much as the finest of all fine ladies could the loss of a masquerade or ball at court; but I hope to get better, though in the mean time these sweet autumnal days are fading away, and this soft unclouded moon will shortly cease to glimmer on a calm sea. The comfort is that, with returning health, every season will have its charms; and though I shall lose the best days of autumn, if it please God, I am tolerably well, I can amuse myself with the scenes of winter.

The present contention between the Turks and Russians, is indeed a very important object, and all who consider it in the view you mention, will watch its progress with a much more interesting curiosity than can be excited by the common events of war. But I cannot agree with you in thinking, whatever success may attend the Czarina, that any figure such a character can make, from shining in the parade of conquest, to sitting at the head of councils, can be any honor to our sex. If she is crowned empress of the

the Greek Christians at Constantinople, the event will be great and astonishing, but surely one can consider her in no other light than an instrument in the hand of the Sovereign Disposer of all things, who frequently applies the passions, and the talents, of wretched and ambitious agents, to bring about those revolutions, which his providence determines in the government of the world. I will read Mr. Beattie's book, whenever I have an opportunity.

I am happy to hear the Dunbars are safe arrived; a sore throat fortunately prevented their being at sea during that dreadful storm. Our dear Sylph is coming, but goes to Bath first. Miss Finch, I am happy to say, is better. I find, upon enquiry by Mrs. Pitt's servant, that the reports about our foundling, are not exactly true, but it has all been put to rights, so that she will again do well. Adieu, my dear friend. I am really better to-day, but sick or well, I am unalterably yours, &c. &c.

LETTER CXXX.

Deal, *November* 29, 1770.

As in your first letter, my dear friend, you named the 19th for your setting out, it was impossible for my answer to have reached you till that very day. I hope my thanks for both may now safely be directed to Hill-street. I hope the affair of the coal-mines turned out better at the meeting than you seemed to apprehend.

It is to be feared, notwithstanding your gratitude to the Czarina, that our general condition is not likely to be much improved by the appearance of a termagant genius of an Empress, once or twice in an age. I suppose you know that Princess Daschan, who at nineteen harangued the troops, and was the principal instrument of bringing about the Revolution, is now in England. She seems to be a most extraordinary genius. She rides in boots, and all the other habiliments of a man, and in all the manners and attitudes belonging to that dress. This might be accounted for, from the custom of her country, and the greater safety of managing her horse. But she likewise dances in a masculine habit, and

I believe

I believe appears as often in it as in her proper dress. Would not one think from all this, that it would be quite terrible to meet her on Bagshot-heath? But you may visit Mrs. Wilmot in safety. She is, in spite of this formidable appearance, remarkably gentle; has weak nerves, and low spirits, and great delicacy both of sentiment and conversation. She is very careful of the education of her son, and told him once, she had rather see his neck twisted, than that he should act unworthy of the memory of his father, of whom she always speaks with the highest esteem and tenderness. It seems she had seen herself upon the list of those whom the Emperor had marked for destruction. As instrumental as she was in bringing about the Revolution, it is said, she had no share in his death. It is happy for her if this circumstance is true. She is very negligent in her female dress, and renounces all respect to her high rank, unless it is paid to her character. As this lady seems an unusual kind of phenomenon, I have told you a good deal about her, and I have it upon very good authority. The Russian ambassador has orders from the Czarina, to shew her all kinds of attentions while she is here; probably she may not be sorry to have her any where rather than at her elbow.

I congratulate you most heartily on your being fairly

fairly rid of your wild headed cousin. Your affairs must have been in perpetual *brouillerie*, under the management of such a conductor, besides the awkward inconvenience of having your house stormed, and poor Israel starting *en sursault*, at three o'clock in the morning. I pity poor Miss Gregory for the pain of quitting you. The feelings of young people are very strong, as their uneasiness is not softened by anticipating the consolation of reflecting on a past pleasure, nor by the hope of its return; but all is confined to the sentiment of the present distressing moment.

I heartily wish you may have resolution enough to adhere to the prescriptions of your Scotch doctors, in defiance of all solicitations. As luckily I have none of the requisites for routs, rackets, and conversations, I can be in no danger of offering you any temptations, and I am too desirous of your living to the age of a Sybil, to aid and abet the temptations of others. Indeed I felt so heartily grieved and uneasy last winter, at finding myself included in the number of those who contributed to hurt your health, from having foolishly and inadvertently sometimes delivered messages from a few of my friends, with the addition, I am afraid, of expressing what it would have been pretty difficult to conceal, my own wishes

of

of meeting you, that I give you my absolute word to be more cautious for the future, and leave people to plead their own cause.

I fear poor Lord Lyttelton's affectionate heart must again be hurt, by the dangerous illness of Mr. G. Grenville, whom the papers represent in so doubtful a state. Miss Finch's cough is better, but it proceeded from a cold, caught at Burleigh. It is scarcely possible by any precaution, to air a large old house, almost constantly uninhabited. After much uncertainty of what was become of our Sylph, I last night received a letter from her, dated Chester, from whence she was to set out for Bath. I wish for your sake it had been to Bolton-row. I am not interested for myself till January. Adieu, my dear friend. I am in great joy at your having got within my reach.

Yours affectionately.

LETTER CXXXI.

Deal, *November* 30, 1770.

I MUST insist, my dear friend, that you do not write me long letters, till stooping does not hurt you; a single line, to assure me you are tolerable,

tolerable, will suffice me, now that I know you are in the habitable world, and not within the polar circle, for I have the happiness of receiving frequent accounts of you from several of our common friends.

As they did not suffer for it, I thought it a very favourable storm, that procured me a sight of Mr. and Mrs. Pulteney. I hope her health is a good deal mended by the Spa. It grieved me, that the sea-sickness, and a very rainy miserable day, kept them at a dirty inn, and prevented my having the pleasure of their company, in at least a cleaner and more quiet house. How have you stood all this uproar of the elements? My little tenement is so exposed, that my friends here seem to suspect, I am in great danger of being blown away, by the messages and inquiries sent after me, since the tempests of this last week. Part of my roof has indeed been laid open to the sky, but fortunately it happened in the night, and no one was injured: had it been in the day-time, the tiles might have caused some serious injury to some one of the family.

One must be sorry for Mr. Grenville's death: the loss of a man of good character in private life, must always be a very melancholy circumstance to his family and friends. With regard to the public, the difference between one states-

man

man and another, for the last ten years, seems not very considerable. All (except one very short administration) have taken care to secure their own advantages, and left the nation to amuse itself with the same subjects of complaint. I see by the papers, that the supporters of the Bill of Rights are quarrelling among themselves, which is probably of no great consequence to the rest of the kingdom. Little good can be hoped from an opposition so wildly and unreasonably conducted, as must terrify sober and well-intentioned people from joining them, however they may wish an alteration in the public measures.

It is well that there is any good reason for the hope that the French will not join the Spaniards in case of a war. Our situation at present seems to be very alarming and unprepared. It is to be hoped that the gentlemen in opposition will not unnecessarily distress government in any scheme really proper for the general defence, and that they will deny themselves the comfort and amusement of hanging the ministry till a more convenient opportunity. I believe you will not agree with me, in wishing Lord Chatham at the head of affairs; but indeed I cannot help being of opinion, that in a situation like the present, he is the only one who, humanly speaking, can extricate the nation out of its difficulties, and raise it from

from that contempt which has probably drawn on our dangers from Spain.

If you have read the paper signed Lexiphanes, I dare say you have maliciously laughed at the indignation, which you would know I should feel, at the repetition of dull and spiteful ridicule on my favorite author *. I have lately been reading his notes on Shakespear. I will not undertake his defence as a commentator; but the work is valuable for many strokes of his own great, and refined, and delicate way of thinking. But pray did you never observe, that with all his encomiums on our Bishop, he sometimes, in the most polite and elegant language, treats him more severely than his most open and professed enemies. These have

"Kicked, and cuffed, and split, and tore, and rent,
And done they know not what, in their avengement."

Some of them have scratched his face with their nails, and others have pelted him with stones and brickbats, till he was black and blue; but the pen of Dr. Johnson, like the ethereal stroke of lightning, without any external mark of violence, has penetrated to his vitals †.

* Dr. Johnson.

† Mrs. Carter's opinion was verified by the event. No circumstance in Bishop Warburton's literary life seems to have

I have not heard from Mrs. Vesey since she left Chester, but suppose she will soon be with you in town; and I shall very soon after think of being there myself, a thought which helps to wear away many hours of pain. God bless you, my dear friend, with health and happiness, but pray take care of yourself for the sake of all those who love you, and who delight as much in your society as

Yours affectionately, &c.

LETTER CXXXII.

Deal, *December* 20, 1770.

Your letter, my dear friend, kindly relieved my impatience to hear from you, but alas! did not give me that information my heart wished for. I am glad you are so careful of yourself, and pray persevere, and God grant you success. My spirits are particularly low just now, and my thoughts too strongly tinctured by the recollec-

have affected him more than the manner in which his absurd criticisms on, and explanation of, the text of Shakespear, were treated by Dr. Johnson. He could neither write nor speak of it with temper.

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tions arising from this sad anniversary, not to see whatever particularly interests my heart in a too melancholy view *. I remember when I once felt the shock of an earthquake, long after it was over, the ground seemed to sink beneath my feet, when in reality all was safe and still.

I rejoice with you on the *enbonpoint* of our dear Mrs. Vesey, even if it should debase her from being a shadowy Sylph, to a mere earthly fat gentlewoman, in perfectly vulgar good health Be so good as to give my affectionate love to her, and dear good Mrs. Hancock, who I rejoice to hear is quite recovered. After the melancholy account I heard of Miss Dawes, I was glad to find she was in such a living way ; her loss would have been a sad afflicting stroke to poor Mrs. Delany. I wish the report of Lord Bottetourt's death may prove a falsehood. I could not help being struck when I read the account in the papers. Too much action, and too little thought, forms a strange perplexity of character, which at once interests and puzzles ; and one cannot help wishing such a man to live on, in the hope that the fermentation of right and wrong may at length subside, and all grow clearer at last.

* This probably alludes to the death of Miss Talbot, which took place in the preceding winter, in the month of January.

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The two last days of severe cold weather have braced up my poor shattered constitution, and rendered it for the present much more tidy than for some weeks past; but it is a ragged and bad one, and by the next thaw will probably be hanging all in tatters. I hope to set out on Friday for Tunstal, and early in the following week hope to be in town, but I have a good many odds and ends to wind up before I leave this, and my sad head will not always allow me to do as much as I wish, and often not half what I ought. Adieu, my dear friend; I hope returning health will soon put you into good humour with the old year, and shall be happy if you are the better pleased with the new one, if it conveys to you

Your most affectionate, &c.

LETTER CXXXIII.

June 8, 1771.

If I was not in the highest good-humour, my dearest friend, at the good account you give of your health, I would quarrel with you for the length of your letter: one page is all I allow you to write, and as much less as you please, pro-

vided it says you are well, for I am thoroughly persuaded, that to a constitution, whose springs have been so much overstrained, a total suspension of all application is positively necessary, and therefore I desire you will not disregard my *veto*.

I had a letter from London, dated a day later than your's, which mentioned the poor Bishop of Durham being still alive, so I hope you will meet with no difficulties. I am obliged to you for mentioning so many of our friends; it is pleasant to think on so many people, whom one esteems and loves, and who so much esteem and love each other, being assembled together, and by that means lessening the *ennui* of a situation, the effect of necessity not of choice. I hope Lady Dartrey will find all the benefit she expects from Tunbridge.

I cannot think what is become of our Sylph. She desired me to write to her from Tunstal, and I obeyed her the day after I got there; but have not heard a word from her, or of her since. Probably she is at Old Windsor, tugging poor Lady Primrose over land and water, to every place within the reach of a ferry, or a post-chaise. I wish she may join the party at Tunbridge, which would do her a world of good; you would like it, and she would not dislike or find the least objec-

tion

tion to the kind of life that you disclaim. I am glad you are at Mount Ephraim, as you certainly can live quieter there than on the pantiles: you are very good in wishing me with you.

I must tell you what a providential escape I had yesterday morning. I was going out to walk with my dog, and at the door another dog fell violently upon him; I drove him off with a stick, and some pebbles, and walked on; he immediately renewed his attack upon my dog; I again drove him off: as he passed by me, I saw something in his appearance which gave me a suspicion of his being mad. After I returned from my walk, I described the dog to our servant, who said he knew him well, and he thought I must be mistaken in my suspicions; but a few hours afterwards he very properly came and told me that the dog was mad, that he had bit several other dogs, and was just then hanged. What a mercy it was, that after I had provoked him, he did not fall upon me! You will easily believe there were immediate orders given for dispatching my poor old dog; and I am sure I need not say how much I was grieved for this necessity, for though I am by no means inclined to have any great fondness for animals, this poor creature had for so many years attended me in my walks, that it was impossible not to have some very uncomfortable

feelings about this accident, though I have so much reason to be thankful it was no worse. It seems there have been more mad dogs lately than ever I knew. My brother, some little time ago, was obliged to destroy all his, from their having been bit.

Lord and Lady Ancram, and their family, are come to Deal, so our sea-bathing season begins very early; indeed, our's is such a fine open coast, I wonder more people do not come to us, the water is so fine. Lady Holdernesse came to day for a short time only. I am glad to hear Miss Stanley has so fair a prospect of being advantageously established. I am afraid you will scarce be able to read this, for I cannot see what I write, so I must say adieu, my dear friend.

LETTER CXXXIV.

Deal, *July* 2, 1771.

I DID not, my dear friend, receive your letter till several days after that on which it ought to have arrived, and I cannot account for the delay; but I was rejoiced to receive it, as it assured

sured me you was going on well, and benefiting by your *sejour* on Mount Ephraim.

Indeed, it would be in vain for you to seek for a likeness of our Sylph, in the environs of Tunbridge, or in any other region below the moon; you can never find it except among the visitors of your own imagination. I remember when you first talked of introducing me to Mrs. Vesey, there happened so many impediments and disappointments, that I affirmed she was a mere "*ens rationis*," and a fiction of your own invention. I am sometimes inclined to relapse into the same opinion; only, as I then took her for a reverie of your's, I now take her for one of my own; but our reveries are often so much alike, that this makes no great difference, and only furnishes a stronger proof against her real existence. However, if she does actually, as well as potentially exist, it is in a way entirely her own.

I have suffered so much that I have not been able to accompany you in Tacitus, as I could have wished. I allow your similes in favor of your own hypothesis to be extremely ingenious and brilliant, but I think they are not strictly just. To have stated the comparison fairly, I think you should have supposed the materials of your temple, to have been of the most solid strength, and the most exquisite beauty, but the building framed

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framed with monstrous disproportion. Would it in that case, have been an object of admiration? An object of terror indeed it might be, as such a wrong disposition of the parts of which it is composed, would render it liable to be perpetually crushing all who came within its reach. I have the more courage in attacking you through Augustus, as I have so wise, and so venerable an authority on my side, as that of Tacitus. I never can think without horror, of a wretch who, to the gratification of his own selfish passions, sacrificed the lives of so many thousands, and the liberty of a whole people. I shall readily allow that the divine principles of virtue, were never completely understood, till the world was enlightened by Christianity; and that our censures on the failings of many great characters, in the the heathen world, ought to be moderated by charity and candour. But still that different application of talents, to good or bad purposes, which forms the difference of moral character with regard to the world, has ever subsisted, and our judgment of human actions, ought to be regulated accordingly *. I have a world more to say

* That is in other and better words, that *as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law.*

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in support of my aversion to your hero, but I must answer the other parts of your letter.

I know you will chide me for most heartily disliking Aristotle's Ethics. It may not be for my credit, perhaps, to say so; and yet I cannot help thinking it a performance for which no mortal was ever the wiser or the better, and that one might learn just as much of the nature and practice of virtue*, by studying a treatise on the longitude. Indeed, all systems of virtue are mere chimeras, when not founded on the will of God, and that relation in which created beings stand to their Creator; and of this Aristotle has not said one syllable.

You will certainly think I have set myself down to write a critical review, so I will say no more about books, when I have told you how grievously I was disappointed in the entertainment I expected in Corneille, which I had not looked into these twenty years, and had totally

* The proof of the truth of this assertion, if any proof be required, is to be found in the contradictory views which the best and wisest of the heathen philosophers had upon this interesting subject. None of them agreeing universally upon the same principles; many of them entirely differing from each other; and all of them allowing of some vices, though not of the same. See Dr. Jenkin's "Reasonableness "and Certainty of the Christian Religion;" and Ellis's "Knowledge of Divine Things from Revelation."

forgot,

forgot. His characters seem to me to have no earthly thing to do, but to reason, and talk sentences *a l'envi*. Polyenete however is excellent, or rather Pauline. I cannot however quit the subject of books, without heartily joining with you, in the wish of such a kind of supplement to De Solis as you propose. Though I cannot at present enter upon a confutation of your marmalade sophistry, I cannot help expressing the pleasure it gives me, that you will comply with Miss Read's request; the manner in which you propose to do it, is certain extremely proper, and worthy of yourself.

I am glad you have such good accounts from your colliery; indeed, whatever you may think about it, nobody loves money better than I do, both for my friends and myself. I hear my Lord Lyttelton is expected soon at Deal Castle. I hope public affairs will at last be settled for the best. It will be one proof, I think, that they are so, if his Lordship has a share in the administration of them. With all my avarice of admiration, I have a great deal at the service of a character like his. I am much obliged to you, and most heartily thank you, for your very kind remembrance of the time we so delightfully passed together at Tunbridge; I can find nothing that will, in any degree, replace the pleasure I then enjoyed,

enjoyed, but a frequent intelligence that you derive the same advantage from the same place.

I most sincerely thank you for that variety of noble meditations, which you have pointed out to me on a view of the ocean. I had no rest till I had read your letter upon the sea-shore. I accordingly did read it there, and heartily wished I could have been interrupted in my reading—— by the writer. You flatter my local vanity, in the compliment you pay to our shore at Deal. Indeed it is much finer than any I have ever had an opportunity of seeing. I spent a day lately at Margate, and quite blest myself on the different appearance of the sea, between that place and this. I had the pleasure of meeting with one of your brothers there, I believe it was Mr. Charles Robinson; and, even at the hazard of appearing very impertinent, I could not forbear speaking to him, and making an enquiry after you.

Pray write soon, not a long letter, but merely an account of your health, with which I shall be perfectly well satisfied, and look on it as a proof that you retain that affection which has so great, perhaps, so unreasonable a share, in the happiness of my dearest friend.

Yours, &c. &c.

LETTER CXXXV.

Deal, *July* 8, 1771.

My dear friend,

PROVIDED you always retain the virtues of a good Christian, I shall always be mighty glad to hear, of your being as rich as a Jew; and even if you were to forfeit some of the accomplishments of a fine lady, I must be awkward enough to rejoice, at your having the health of a dairy maid. However, as your genius takes a pretty ample sweep, I am in no great apprehension, but you may contrive to keep both. I enjoy by proxy, the beneficial effects of Tunbridge waters, on my friends; and I heartily wish our dear Sylph had shared it, for I do not like the accounts I hear of her. If you have heard any thing of her, pray mention it when you write, for she is a very idle correspondent herself.

You want me to be interested about the city election, alas! for which side could one be much interested? Not for Wilkes, who has been too bad a man, for one possibly to suppose him a good patriot; nor for a ministry which has made use of such methods to prevent the freedom of election. In short, on all sides, there seems so little

little to be hoped, and so much to be feared, that it is very difficult for any person, not influenced by partiality for either, to know how to form any wish. Happy are those whom the quiet obscurity of private life, exempts from taking any part, in such a state of public confusion and disorder!

I never heard of a more outrageously impudent falsehood, than that in the papers, which affirmed that Archbishop Secker was made a Bishop at thirty. I see it is contradicted in the last news; if those who invented it, ever read his life, they must surely flatter themselves, that nobody else ever did.

I dare say you do miss dear Lady Dartrey, and her lovely fairy child; nor do I wonder at your despair at parting with Mrs. J. Pitt and family; people so good, so friendly, and so agreeable as they are, must make a sad blank in the society they quit, for they must be much beloved.

I am delighted that you have not any thoughts of going to the Installation, and give you all credit for your forbearance; but I certainly think the heat and the crowd would be quite too much for your health, otherwise I should think it must be a strong temptation, as I imagine it must be one of the finest sights, that mortal

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pomp and magnificence have to bestow. I must confess, that if I could have seen it, with any tolerable ease, it would have been a raree-show, greatly to my taste; but perhaps it is from a false idea, that it would realize all one's imaginations of chivalry, and Gothic grandeur, for which Windsor Castle is an admirable scene. You bid me be glad of the Bishop of Lincoln's preferment, but you do not tell me what it is, and I have sought in vain for it in the papers. Adieu, my dear friend, I fear you have given up all thoughts of visiting this part of Kent this year, as you do not mention it in your last letter. I hope the heavy clouds are all dispersed, and, by this time, lost their weight, and leave you to the enjoyment of the same fine summer-like days, as we have at present here. I am, &c. &c.

LETTER CXXXVI.

Deal, *July* 14, 1771.

Without the help of your explanation, my dear friend, I had presently discovered who your visitor must be. But, alas, it grieves me to find that mixed up with the aerial qualities of the

the Sylph, there is so alarming a proportion of the more mortal woman. Indeed her present state of health is terrifying, for it appears to me more eccentric than I ever knew it; and one feels the more uncomfortable about it, from the knowledge that she will never keep long enough to any one remedy, to allow it to be as beneficial to her as it *can*, merely because she does not find it as beneficial to her as she *expects*. There are very many intermediate degrees, between absolute health, and such a miserable want of it, as destroys all the enjoyment of life; and, in cases which do not admit of cure, if people would condescend to be contented with amendment and relief, their sufferings would often be reduced to a very tolerable state, and their minds acquire that tranquillity and cheerfulness, which can never subsist amidst ineffectual wishes for an unattainable object. But, indeed, it is our poor, dear Sylph's misfortune, in every pursuit, to raise her expectations too high, for the condition of mortality; and this gives her that perpetual restlessness of body and mind, which harasses and wears out both *. She scarcely ever, I believe, enjoys

* This restlessness of mind probably arose from some physical cause; and Mrs. Carter seems to have had a dread that it might terminate, as actually was at last the case, in mental imbecility.

enjoys any one object, from the apprehension that something better may possibly be found in another. It is really astonishing to see how this restless pursuit counteracts all the feelings of her amiable and affectionate heart. There are few things, I believe, that she loves like you and me; yet when she is with us, she finds that you and I, not being absolute divinities, have no power of bestowing perfect happiness, and so from us she flies away, to try if it is to be met with at an assembly, or an opera. I could dwell by the hour on this subject, though, indeed, it affects and hurts me; for I love her too well, not to feel a very sincere uneasiness, at seeing her so much less happy, than her sweet and engaging character, is qualified to make her. I am glad to find Mrs. Henry is to go in the same ship with her. I fear it will be long, if ever she returns to England again, which will be a very real loss to the society, who are acquainted with her merit, which is as high, as great good sense, joined to the most undeviating uprightness, the most un-

imbecility. Her state of mind seems to have been not unlike that of Dean Swift; but to her its consequences were alleviated as much as possible by the kind attentions of her friends. Mrs. Carter, when she was in town, never omitted going to see her every day, though it was by no means clear whether she knew her once loved friend or not.

affected piety, and the warmest, and most active benevolence can render it.

I heard lately from Mrs. Dunbar, who had called on them, that Lady F. Coningsby and Mrs. Trevors, were quite well. Mrs. J. Pitt is in Dorsetshire, and very well, and very busy, as, God be thanked, she generally is in doing good. Her present scheme is setting up a manufactory, which will employ the poor people and their children, and may prove a lasting benefit to them. But, too probably, she may meet with great difficulties in this excellent design, as she is situated in the midst of smuggling, which is the utter destruction of all honest industry *.

By all that I learn of the Margate masquerade, it was as quiet, and as sober, as the good old ladies, sitting in a row, and talking as well as they could, much in the way of some that I have heard you most irreverently laugh at last winter, could make it. I wish your Paris intelligence may have the good effect of lowering the ladies' heads next winter, to some standard more consistent with the human form. I am glad you

* Of this truth, in the situation in which she lived, Mrs. Carter had continual and melancholy evidence constantly before her eyes. But she and all her family discouraged it as much as was in their power, both by precept and example.

have

have had such good accounts from Mr. Montagu, and I hope you will have no alarms that shall draw you from a place where you are receiving so much benefit, and where I would wish you to continue the longest time possible.

Your godson and his brother are with us, and feel both very happy in your kind postscript to them. The frigate that carried Mr. Banks, and the other philosophers, to make observations, I know not where, or about what, is now in the Downs; and the said philosophers have been on shore, and my nephews have been wild to see them, in order to ask them questions of what they have been doing; but happily for them they have never fallen in their way. Their curiosity is universal, and takes in *omne scibile*, so far forth as it can be acquired in the way of question and answer. Adieu, my dearest friend, God continue to you the blessings of health, and every other. I am,

Most faithfully, &c.

LETTER CXXXVII.

Deal, *August* 30, 1771.

A THOUSAND thanks to you, my dear friend, for giving me the pleasure of knowing you are so well recovered; it is probable the late storms may have affected your health. I have seldom known a more violent tempest, both of wind and rain, than we had here two or three days ago. The harvest about us is so nearly over, that it did us no hurt, and never was there a finer season known. Whether the blessings of heaven will produce the effects which ought to arise from plenty, time will shew; but there seems to have been for some years, such a disposition in the good people of this land, to devour or starve each other, that I fear, it is doubtful, whether the poor may be relieved by a cheaper purchase of the necessaries of life.

There are, I believe, no new Sermons of Archbishop Secker's just come out. There have been seven volumes published since his death; and it is more than a year, since the last of these appeared. They are, indeed, most admirable discourses. The fairness and simplicity of his arguments, and that penetrating force with which

he addresses them to the heart and conscience, render him, I think, the most capable of producing the effect, at which he aims, of any preacher I ever knew. After having finished these Sermons, I am at present going through Bishop Sherlock's: he is, for the most part, very excellent; but do you not sometimes find him too *clever:* and are not you sometimes vexed and offended, by instances of ingenious sophistry, which are rather less unbecoming the bar, than the pulpit? In reading books of divinity, besides what I chiefly need, my own improvement, I have a view to the selecting such as are proper to recommend to those, who are unhappy enough to have entertained prejudices against the Gospel; and it is surprizing how very difficult it is to find, in this view, an unexceptionable author. Most of those with whom I am acquainted, in some instance or other, injure the cause of truth, by a weak or improper defence. And people tinctured by prejudices, or disposed to cavil, will overlook all the strongest arguments, and contrive to strengthen their own errors from the weak ones. Archbishop Secker's are, I think, the least liable to any objection, of all other; and, if the most valuable part of Sherlock's could be selected, they are certainly amazingly forcible and convincing; but, in their present

sent mixture, I should much fear whether, to an unbeliever, they might not do more harm than good, though a Christian may derive very great advantage from them *.

I thank you for the history of the Duke de Choiseul's comic revenge on Voltaire. Not but he has reaped just such a harvest as he had reason to expect from the cultivation of such a soil. Whoever encourages wickedness by entering into connection (I will not profane the name of friendship) with a bad man, has no reason to complain of ingratitude in return for his favors. The wretch, who outrageously violates his duty to heaven, can never, upon any reasonable ground, be expected to preserve any regard to the obligations due to his inferior benefactors.

> "Can lesser wheels, repeat their native stroke,
> When the prime function of the soul is broke."

Whether I ever do or do not receive that long letter, which you was so good as to lock up in a drawer for me, I hereby give you a receipt in full of all demands, in the article of long letters, till I am so happy as to see you. Indeed, my heart is so much more interested in your health, than my head in your genius; and the concerns

* Mrs. Carter's opinion of the works of these two eminent Divines, continued unchanged to the last.

of my heart are, moreover, of so much more importance to me, than those of my head, that I wish most heartily to receive no more from you than a *vessel* of paper, which will be sufficient to convey to me all I want to know; viz. that you are well, and that you have not forgot me.

I was very sorry to hear of poor Doctor Gregory's affliction, which, as far as one can judge of his heart by his writings, he must have felt very severely. Poor man, it is an alarming circumstance, that his daughter died of a consumption, as that is so often a family distemper. I have watched the weather, particularly *a votre intention;* and hope, upon the whole, you have found it tolerable, though not perfectly favorable. At least, I hope, whatever disagreeable intervals of sullen cloudiness may have obscured your prospects, the evil has been merely external, and not reached your health, or interrupted your perfect enjoyment of the society of your friends. I beg my affectionate regards to my Lord Lyttelton. Is his Henry published yet?

My love to the dear Sylph, who has forgot me, and to Mrs. Hancock who has not; I have the pleasure of talking them over sometimes with Lady Ancram and Mrs. Crofton, who have been here good part of the summer; and I hope will stay some weeks longer, as her Ladyship's health

is

is much improved by the sea and riding. All this intelligence is not for you, who do not know her, but for Mrs. Vesey who does. *A vous pour la vie*, my dearest friend.

LETTER CXXXVIII.

Deal, *September* 18, 1771.

I HEARTILY rejoice, my dear friend, that the affair which brought you to town, and gave you so much perplexity and distress, is so well settled. It must have been extremely trying to your disposition, to have seen so much unfeelingness, when you was doing all you could from the very best of motives, his welfare here and hereafter; but you must have been repaid by the happy reflection, that, as your tenderness was, on this account, so particularly necessary to the poor sufferer, it has pleased God to put it into your power, to render it effectual to his comfort, if he chuses.

The Portsmouth story has never carried any great air of probability. If Britain is not mad, what a horrid wretch he must be! The present times, bad as they are, yet I hope are not yet so bad,

bad, as to produce any such effects from this story, as may be fatal to innocent people. One shudders at the thoughts of what plots, and rumours of plots, have occasioned in former reigns. At all events, it is a sad symptom of our situation.

Mrs. Dunbar tells me, that she has read in the papers, that our Sylph is landed in Dublin. I suppose it is from the Irish newspapers, and, if our Sylph had not been very idle, she might have acquainted us with her safe arrival before this time. The short suspence of your sweet airings, by those two dreary wet days, has probably made you enjoy, with the more spirit, this delightful harvest weather, by which most happily they are succeeded. Yesterday was the finest day we have had in this part of the world this summer. I had a most delightful walk in the evening, and enjoyed the most beautiful view of the moon, rising out of a calm sea, in the warmest, sweetest evening imaginable.

I hear we are going to be prodigiously magnificent in this neighbourhood, by the arrival of the Princess Amelia, at the distance of two or three miles from this place. I have some reason to believe it true, and yet the house said to be taken, does not seem to me big enough to contain her Royal Highnesse's fan, with all the proper officers belong-

belonging to it. Great doings I hear at Margate, more masquerades, O dear, O dear, must extravagance and folly travel thus to the very limits of the land! I would write more, but my aching head says nay, and I must to my pillow, so adieu.

LETTER CXXXIX.

Deal, *October* 17, 1771.

I RECEIVED with great pleasure, my dear friend, the account of your being safe arrived at your journey's end, and that you found your colliery going on in a prosperous way, and that Mr. Montagu bore his journey well, after all he has suffered. I rejoice that Mr. Matthew Robinson * has given your mind so much ease, by a promise which, I hope in God, he will not be called upon to perform. It is certainly however right for you to have taken every human and prudent precaution. When this point has been performed, the next is without solicitude to consign the event to him who never dies.

* Afterwards Lord Rokeby.

No

No doubt but poor Lady Mary Scott's conduct is full of inconsistency and folly. But such is ever the character of ungoverned passions, let the degree of understanding be what it will. I never heard whether her marriage was agreeable to her own choice, or a mere destination of her father. In the latter case, though nothing can excuse such terrible guilt, it is entitled to more compassion. I think she cannot now be much more than twenty. General Scott has acquired his fortune by gaming. He plays, as it is called, very fairly; but so much upon system, that, I have been told, he drinks nothing but water, that his head may be always perfectly cool. What a contrast between this deliberate principle of rapine, and the violent impetus of his lady's passions! How could any man have the folly to entrust the virtue of his daughter to such a director!—

Lord K——'s daughter has certainly a full excuse for the irregularity of her conduct, by the disorder of her mind; and is much less an object of censure, than her father, in the publication of such opinions, as tend to remove the merciful, and only universally effectual restraint, which the awful check of Divine Authority imposes on the wild demands of the passions. I never yet heard, that any infidel denied, but that Christianity tended

tended to improve the morals, and secure the peace of society. Then what excuse can there be for those who endeavour to weaken its authority. People may have pitiable doubts themselves of its truth, but no one can have a certainty that it is false; and mere doubts can never be a justification, for endeavouring to unsettle the principles, and disturb the peace of others.

Why does Dr. Beattie sell the copy of his works? It is abominable he should have such a shabby price for the second edition of the Minstrel. I am obliged to you for having given me an account of our Sylph; I am not yet entitled to hear from her, as my answer to her last cannot yet have reached Lucan. What, and by whom, are the Travels round the World, which you mention? for I have not heard a syllable about them, except from your letter. You ask me if I never visit my friends at Canterbury; but, indeed, except the two days which I spent with Mrs. Dunbar at Margate, who sent a conveyance for me, I have never stirred out of this place, beyond the limits of a walk, and usually a short one, for I have never been able to extend it far enough to reach some visits which I want to pay in the country.

The dear Penningtons' are all with us; my sister came for change of air, and is, thank God, very

very much better; they take up a good deal of my time, and not being very stout I have not much time or inclination for much exertion, and the weather has been dreadfully wet and damp, which you know always affects,

Yours truly.

LETTER CXL.

Deal, *November* 2, 1771.

INDEED, my dear friend, your face is a most unreasonable face, not to be in tolerable good humour, either at home or abroad. By this time I hope it has got into better temper, and will at least suffer you to amuse yourself by your own fire-side. I should have answered your letter before, but I do not like to write to you when my spirits are in an uncomfortable state, which they have been for some time past, as my father has been ill, and suffering very much; but thank God, to-day he is much better, and so am I too: there has not, I am thankful to say, been any appearance of danger, but at his age, and with his very great dislike to taking any kind of medicine, I always feel alarmed. He is, in re-

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gard to remedies which are judged proper for him, too much like our Sylph, in not enough distinguishing, between perfect ease, and great pain; and seems to think, that what does not produce the one, is no kind of guard against the other.

I am grieved to find by the papers, that our poor friend Mrs. Howe has lost her brother *. I think you did not know him. By what little I have seen of him, I should judge him to be a very considerable loss to his family. He appeared to me remarkably pleasing; and, I believe, he was both in understanding and acquired knowledge, a very extraordinary young man. I have not heard in what manner Miss Howe supports this stroke, her affection for him used to hurt her health extremely, upon every absence. How will it stand this last separation! But people are wonderfully carried through such circumstances, as to human foresight appear insupportable. I wrote to our friend a day or two ago, which was as soon as I had heard with any certainty of this event.

We have terrible accounts in the newspapers of the damage done at Newcastle [illegible] Mr. Montagu is not there, nor much engaged in it, nor any ways damaged by it. Indeed I hope very little of it may be true, probably the coal

* The Honorable Thomas Howe: he died unmarried.

merchants

merchants in London may make an inundation in the coal mines, with the same view as the stock jobbers kindle a war.

I could not help feeling shocked to-day, on reading the Chamberlain's order for a ball on the Princess Dowager of Wales's birth-day, at a time when she is in such a state, that perhaps before it arrives, he may be obliged to change his advertisement into an order for her mourning. One would think, in her deplorable state, all the court etiquette would much better have been avoided. It cannot be necessary to conceal a danger from herself of which it can hardly be supposed she can possibly be ignorant.

I have heard nothing of Capt. Fielding since his return to England; I hope his native air will restore him, but the accounts before his arrival were very uncomfortable. He had six relapses into the distemper of that horrid climate, and his sufferings, poor soul, have been extreme. I hope it will please God to spare him to his family, to whom he would be a sad loss, as I believe him to be a most excellent young man; they have, as you may suppose, been in very great distress about him; Lady Charlotte Finch has felt for him as for a son of her own, and that is saying every thing; for she is, I think, the most amiable of all parents, I ever knew; in-

deed

deed in all respects, she is a character most uncommonly great and good, and unites a high dignity of virtue, with a most sweet and engaging temper; which continually prompts her to endeavour at procuring that happiness for others, which spirits harassed and oppressed by various trials, will not allow her to feel for herself.

In a case of such very essential importance as the blessing of health, surely, my dear friend, you will think it necessary to exert your good sense and your virtue, in opposition to the temptation of being merely *civil* in the estimation of the *world*. You can have no difficulty to encounter from your *friends*, who are too sensible of the value of such a life, to wish to sacrifice it to their own *particular gratification*, whenever that will interfere with their general end. So that indeed, I think, if your own inclination and endeavours are very much in earnest, you may enter into society not a step further than you find perfectly consistent with your health. Indeed it would be downright sinful, after it has pleased God to re-establish it in a manner quite beyond our hopes, if you were to lavish it away upon any of the foolish ceremonies and affections of a town life. I am too tenderly interested in this point, not to use every endeavour in my power to prevent your running into mischief; but,

but, alas! the world was much too hard for me last winter, and I shall be happy if it is less powerful in the next. I wish you to be in society, because it is good for you, and because you are one of its chief ornaments; but do not, pray do not, run wild. I found society in the summer very useful to me at times, when I was neither ill enough to be confined, nor well enough to apply to any thing. There have been a good many of my friends at Deal this year, and as I saw enough of them to enliven my spirits, and not enough to fatigue them, they did me a great deal of good. I am heartily glad that the recovery of the deeds has delivered you from the "*onus probandi*," that the hospital would have imposed on you.

Lady Dartrey wrote me a very comfortable account of your looks, which I hope to see verified soon after Christmas; I cannot, by any means, come before the usual time, though you so kindly and affectionately wish me. I shall write about my lodgings next week, if my father has no fear of return of his disorder; but I have no heart to do it till he gets stout, and I can leave him with comfort to my own feelings, and a moral certainty that he will not want me. Adieu, my dearest friend; pray, in remembering me, remember my advice, as it comes from a heart whose

whose happiness is much dependant on your health, and your continued affection to

Yours, &c. &c.

LETTER CXLI.

Deal, *November* 14, 1771.

WELCOME, my dear friend, to you fire-side in Hill-street, which I am glad to find you can contrive to make as quiet and solitary as your fire-side in Berkshire, with the advantage of being within reach of human creatures, whenever you find them preferable to silence and repose. I most highly applaud your resisting the evening society, which would have succeeded a fatiguing morning. I hope, *de tems en tems*, to be informed that you persevere in this laudable opposition to seduction, and then I shall flatter myself, with the happiness of finding you in full possession of all that treasure of health which you collected from the air and water of Tunbridge. I am afraid the last week of fine weather, has made you a little regret leaving the country; but indeed, I believe London is better for you than the country, for, with all the flat-

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tering appearances of the sky, it is severely cold, and Sandleford does not seem a good situation for an invalid, except in the heat of summer.

I have not mentioned the marriage of Sir W—— to Miss G——; he is certainly very happy, by your account in his choice. But will a lady so accomplished, as you describe her, be equally so in her's? However, if he is good-natured, and has sense enough to place a due value on such a wife, all may be well. The felicity, in this case, depends much more on the heart than the head. One must be glad that the poor Duchess is at such a distance. It is, no doubt, extremely fit that Sir W—— should marry, but the bustle must be necessarily very painful to her.

I had a letter from Mrs. Pitt last week; they are all well, and do not come to town till after Christmas. They have been at Portsmouth, and she makes some observations on the manner in which she was struck with the scenes she saw there, which do equal honor to her head and heart, both, indeed, is the case with all her letters. But these are the only instances in which she discovers a close incommunicative disposition; for she will not allow me ever to show them to any mortal. Capt. Ch. Fielding was at Portsmouth, and dined with them. Mrs. Pitt gives a sad account

account of his appearance, yet both he and his brother affirmed that he was surprizingly better; he is gone to Bath, and there are hopes that the waters will entirely cure him.

I am sorry Mrs. Scott is so unwell; Miss Tom, who was staying at Deal this summer, made most honorable mention of her. We are to have a full family next week, all the Penningtons' are coming to celebrate my father's birth-day, which is quite a yearly gala with us, for never was a father better beloved, for never was there one more deserving of it. He is, thank God, amazingly better, and though he has suffered much, yet the attack has been slight by comparison, and we have every reason to think and know, that Sir J. Pringle's receipt has been of the greatest benefit to him; I must mention it, because it is so simple that any body may take it. A pound and a quarter of honey, taken in any way you please, every month; the effect upon my father is surprizing, and has kept him free from any serious attack of the gravel for many months.

Our newspapers give strange, dark, confused accounts of the examination of the Portsmouth affairs; as far as one can judge from this kind of intelligence, it looks more than any thing like a scheme of low villany, of one or two wretched profligates to gain some advantage

by pretended discoveries, at a time when the discontents of the people render them so disposed to adopt every suspicion of a plot. A most miserable symptom of the present state of the nation. It is to be hoped the affair will be most diligently searched to the bottom. What strange horrid letters are continually publishing in the name of that wretch Britain! Is it supposed that there is any foundation for his assertions? Surely the ministry will, for their own sakes, bring him to a fair open examination, the only effectual way of convincing their enemies, if his testimony is false, as is most probably the case.

I have, without the least success, been running over in my thoughts, every person at all likely to be fit for the office you name, and I have consulted Mrs. Underdown, but neither of us can find any one, whom I could venture to recommend. All the people in this place are fully engaged, either in lawful or unlawful trades. Indeed their attachment to the latter is so strong, that most of them had rather suffer want and hunger, than apply themselves to any thing else. —Some of the smugglers, by a late act of violence and folly, with regard to the revenue officers, have occasioned soldiers to be quartered upon the town; and by an insult to one of these, probably the number will be increased, and we

shall be dragooned without mercy; a very disagreeable circumstance to quiet, sober, and orderly people, to have a set of poor, wretched, profligate, swearing soldiers, in every street*.

Adieu, my dear friend. I cannot help feeling a *gaité de cœur*, and lightness of spirits, at the thoughts of your being got within a less distance of me; it will not, I hope, be very many weeks before I am so happy as to be stuck close to your elbow. *En attendant*, I am most faithfully, &c. &c.

LETTER CXLII.

Deal, *December* 22, 1771.

Your kind wishes, my dear friend, are hitherto, I thank God, very successful; I am quite in spirits about my father, who is most remarkably well; better than I have seen him for

* Let it be mentioned to the honor of the army in its present state, that there are now extensive barracks, very near the town, which have been filled with the military during all the late war; and that scarcely any instance of disorder or profligacy has occurred for many years among the soldiers, and among their officers none.

a long time. I am much obliged to you for mentioning the medicine that cured Mr. Garrick, though, as you write the best sense and the worst hand of any gentlewoman in Europe, I could never have made out the name of the author, without the assistance of a friend who was with me, and who had happened to have heard of him, and who will make an enquiry about his lixivium.

I rejoice that dear Lord Lyttelton and Mr. Stillingfleet are recovering. Such characters are not only important to their friends, but to the world in general, who very much want a few more such examples. If you felt the weather last week, I fear you must have felt still more, the outrageous tempest of wind and rain of last Sunday night. It quite demolished my poor, weak, silly head for that day and the next, but I am now better. But we must not complain, for we have had some most delightful fine days, even in this gloomy month and part of the last, and I made all the profit of them I could. There is no great prospect of many more, before I have the felicity of sitting quietly in your dressing-room, and enjoying one of those delicious *tête-à-têtes*, that fully compensate even for such a day of quiet, sober, penetrating rain as to day; there is not a breath of wind, it will therefore render the

ways

ways impracticable to people whose rambling genius is checked by uncomplying health.

Indeed, my dear friend, I must enter my protest, however unsuccessfully, against your going to the play. It seems to me, that one evening past there, may be prejudicial enough to your health, to counteract the cool, quiet solitude of a week passed in your dressing-room. I hope your Northern business is all happily dispatched, and honest Edward Browne trotted back to his station under the pole-star, to which his constitution is, I believe, much better adapted than yours, as well as his disposition. For as Edward with all his merit as a very upright man, has in his composition, a due proportion of the bear, he is most admirably well qualified to deal with your untoward gentry there. Not but your presence may sometimes be necessary to regulate matters, and preserve to humanity its just rights, and keep men and bears within their proper bounds. Adieu, my dearest friend, all else I have to say, I shall reserve till we meet; for just now I am quite in a bustle, and hardly know how I found time to say so much. All here desire to be kindly and respectfully remembered to you; my father particularly for your good wishes on his birth-day; I hope it will please God to bless him with many more, as he at present has the full enjoy-

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ment of all his faculties, which is the greatest of all blessings at his age.—God send, my dear friend, that if you and I live to be as old, we may be equally favored by the Giver of all good, and let me add equally grateful for it *. Once more, God bless you, prays

Yours truly.

LETTER CXLIII.

Clarges Street, *May* 30, 1772.

A THOUSAND thanks to you, my dear friend, for the kind and welcome information of your being got safe and well to Tunbridge. I should have thanked you for it by Thursday's post: but indeed I was so excessively tired with my raking on Wednesday night, and a long walk which I was obliged to take the next morning,

* Both these requests, as the Editor has every reason to believe, were granted. Mrs. Carter lived to her 89th year, in a very remarkable possession of her understanding and senses. Mrs. Montagu died in her 82d year, without any failure but in her eye-sight; and from the known piety of both ladies, their thankfulness and gratitude to the Almighty cannot be doubted.

that

that I was really incapable of writing. It cannot, to be sure, enter into the imagination of your country gentlewomen what fatigues we fine ladies are fated to endure in the exercise of a London life.

The company at Bath House, both of masks and spectators was extremely numerous. I believe you would not have been so well pleased with any figure there, as your sweet little god-daughter, for whom Mrs. Pulteney had contrived a fancy dress extremely simple and pretty. I think none of the characters pleased me so well as a lady in a man's domino, who talked not perhaps in the language, but upon the principles of a maccaroni, with great cleverness and spirit, and with the most gallant contempt of all order, decency, good sense, and humanity, and indeed was the severest and best satirist upon these wretches I have ever heard. I could not find out who she was. I must mention one odd circumstance of the evening. I was accosted by a mask, whom I presently discovered, and after we had discoursed a little while, and were just parted, on turning my head I saw Lord Polworth, who asked me if I knew that mask? To which I answered yes: I believe it is Lady Bell. Grey, is it not? "Yes it is." The asking this question, plainly not for the sake of information, and of a

person

person with whom he was not at all acquainted, I think proves that he was pleased with the subject. It is said Lord Marchmont has made the proposal, and that it has been refused; but whether this be true I know not. If the character given of Lord P. is just, I hope it is not.

I cannot tell whether you heard before you went of a letter written by Lady W. to her father, in which she informs him that she has the Duke of Gloucester's permission to declare, that she was married in 1766. The ceremony was performed by Dr. Green, Dean of Salisbury; she is not to take the title of Duchess of Gloucester.

I met Lady F. Coningsby and Mrs. Trevor yesterday at Mrs. Talbot's, and delivered your kind compliments. I shall see Lady Juliana Penn this day. My father and I are to set out on Tuesday next, and I hope shall be at Deal by Thursday or Friday, where I shall hope for the pleasure of hearing that you go on prosperously with the waters. The weather has been very favorable except one day. I begin to grow impatient to leave London, which will soon become merely smoke and brick houses. I was grieving to think I should leave it on the very day of Mrs. Fielding's return; but I am so lucky to catch a glimpse of her, as she is arrived before Lady

Charlotte,

Charlotte, to accompany Mr. Fielding in his way to Plymouth. Adieu, my dearest friend. I am ever,

Most faithfully, &c.

LETTER CXLIV.

Deal, *June* 8, 1772.

Your letter arrived here, my dear friend, a few hours after me, and made me happy by as good an account as I could well hope from a constitution not formed to stand in "wind and rain," like the sign of the man in true blue. I hope, however, after this temporary inconvenience, the Tunbridge waters will give you an appetite to share in the general blessing of plenty, which, it is to be hoped, these seasonable showers will produce. It was delightful to see how the wheat looked all the way on the road. My father, I thank God, bore his journey extremely well; we stayed at Tunstal till Friday morning, and found the Penningtons' tolerably well, except poor James, who had one of his attacks. I believe there is not the least cause for appre-

apprehending any diminution of your godson's attachment. He enquired after you before I was got fairly out of the chaise.

I read Mr. Jones's publication in great haste one day while you were dressing, and have not seen it since. The poetry is certainly beautiful, but the general idea it gave me was, that of its being too Grecian and classical for an Oriental design. I am glad you are pleased with Dr. Hurd's Lectures. I think there is something original in his manner of treating the subject: and I scarcely ever met with a writer who placed objections in so fair and strong a light. Indeed there is a very noble and liberal spirit through the whole work, and he points out very earnestly, though with great decency, the fatal mistake of resting the truths of christianity on any other foundation than the Gospel.

I one morning picked up the Town Eclogues, and read, I believe, most of them. I do not love to censure, except in cases of importance, what the world in general approves, but one only *thinks* with a friend; and to say truth, if I had not known some instances of the same kind, I should have been surprized at the public approbation of them. They appear to me just what I expected to find them, mere pert common place satire, tagged with miserable rhyme.

I have

I have heard nothing of our friend since I left town. Mrs. J. Pitt arrived in Arlington-street most vexatiously on Monday night, but was come only on business, and to stay but a day; she kindly intended to have given me a glimpse of her the next morning between eight and nine; but alas! I was to set out at five, so I did not see her. Lady F. Coningsby, and Mr. Penn's family were to leave London early in this week.

I have never read Mr. Mede, except in other writers, and I believe he has been found so very useful an assistant in the study of the prophecies, that nearly all his works have been transcribed by later authors on the subject of which he has treated.

I beg my compliments to Miss Gregory when you write; be so good to mention in one word the success of the Valentia cause, which must be, I suppose, decided by this time. I think your improvement of ale into bread was excellent; and I wish the populace might think so too.

All here are much yours; and I more than all the world beside, my dear friend's,

Most obliged, &c.

LETTER CXLV.

Deal, *June* 20, 1772.

INDEED, my dear friend, I at this instant feel very strongly the force of the prejudice, that one's own house is the best of all possible houses, as I am just returned from a visit, which it cost me a great effort of resolution to pay. It is true that I have a very laudable affection for *conversation*, but then it is equally true, that I mortally hate *talking*, and consequently I have no natural talents for a visit. Yet a visit is a part of life, a debt which in many cases one owes to the general relation of human creatures to each other, and which one has no right to withhold merely because it may happen to contradict some more agreeable amusement. Well, *quoad hoc*, I have done my duty, and am flown back with transport to the quiet and cheerfulness of my own little apartment, and the conversation of my dear friend.

I have exceedingly rejoiced in this fine season of dry weather, particularly as it has been so favourable to your pursuit at Tunbridge. I hope while it continues you will bestow as much time

as

as you can possibly spare in laying in a stock of health for the remainder of the year. A few weeks more of idleness, may qualify you for months of activity.

It would be hard indeed if it was fact, that a "strange vulgar necessity should play the lord paramount over all delicate affections." But happily the heart can preserve its own rights, amidst all the interruptions of external bustle, and keep the sentiment alive, however it may be obliged to suspend the expression.

Mrs. Best * called on me this morning, with the same unalterable face as ever, and not looking a day older than I remember her twenty years ago. She asked much after you. She had taken lodgings in this place to bathe in the sea, but found them so inconvenient that she chuses rather to drive from Dover and back again. Our best lodgings here are occupied by the Boyds, who fill the house when they are within, and the street when they walk out. Mrs. Boyd is grown fat, and looks in very good spirits, to which, poor woman, I think she must have a natural tendency, or such a wailing discontented companion must effectually damp them. There

* Wife of Thomas Best, Esq. of Chilston, near Lenham, Lieutenant-Governor of Dover Castle, where he occasionally resided.

is

is a kind of melancholy sentimental pleasure in sympathizing, and endeavouring to relieve the real distresses of those with whom one is connected. But to sit listening to the complaints of people who are wretched they know not why nor wherefore, and without any earthly reason to make them so, is a task at which the understanding revolts, and for which the heart has no feeling.

Princess Amelia, I hear, has taken a house at Walmer. It is prettily situated for any plebeian gentlewoman; but how it can answer any natural demands of the daughter of a king, cannot easily be guessed. I question whether any of the rooms are more spacious than mine in London, and the kitchen is no bigger than a bird cage; so unless her Royal Highness and her suite can live upon shrimps, they will be in danger of being fairly starved off the premises *. Lord and Lady Holdernesse are expected at the castle next week, but not to make any stay.

The account which Mrs. Vesey has sent me of the Valentia cause is, that the three claimants are

* By degrees, however, that house became a very comfortable family mansion. After the Princess Amelia, it was inhabited for several years by the late Marquis and Marchioness of Lothian, and then by General Edward Smith. It is at present untenanted.

inva-

invalidated, but the certificate that legitimates Lord V. was only established in the committee, and agreed to in the House without mentioning the certificate again; so that though it is a tacit acknowledgment of his right, it will not prevent any future claimant. Mrs. Pery was to set out for Spa in a few days: so I suppose the Veseys are not of that party, which probably our friend merely from the love of *going* may regret more than either you or I should do.

Adieu, my dear friend. I am ever,

Most faithfully, &c.

LETTER CXLVI.

Deal, *July* 4, 1772.

It gave me pleasure, my dear friend, to find you had past the latter part of your *sejour* at Tunbridge in so agreeable a manner. By the time her Grace arrived, you must have enjoyed a sufficient degree of the repose of solitude, not to be the worse by an interruption of it, especially by such a one as a visit from any one you wished to see.

I could

I could not help wishing you had past another week or two at Tunbridge, but this dismal day reconciles me to your leaving it, better than a hundred arguments. Indeed, for the last week, the weather has been sullen and ungenial, and very unlike the promising appearance with which the summer opened upon our hopes. However, perhaps this rain may wash away the dregs of a north-east wind, and restore the zephyrs, which a little while ago, reminded one of the summers of other times, when one's spirits felt that peculiar kind of mechanical delight, which nothing but a concurrence of all the circumstances which naturally belong to this fairest season can inspire, and which scarcely ever have concurred for the last six or seven years.

I am exceedingly grieved at the news which you tell me of Mr. Pulteney's being so involved with the Adams's, of which I have not heard one word before. I hope it may have been exaggerated to you, and shall be happy to hear that it is so. If his loss is so great, I should be much more inclined to believe from his character, that he has suffered rather from his generosity in encouraging their undertakings, than from an intention of "making himself the richest man in Great Britain." A person who employs his fortune in so noble and generous a manner, as in

very

very many instances he is known to have done, is more likely to have incurred such a loss from a principle of assisting others, than of grasping at an immoderate increase of wealth for himself. But as I am absolutely ignorant of the state of the affair, I write more from my feelings than any thing else. What a terrible ruin has Fordyce and the other gamblers in the alley, brought upon numbers of unhappy innocent people! and how dreadful have been the consequences, particularly in those families where some have been driven to the horrors of self-murder. I was in some pain about you, when there were suspicions of Sir George Colebrooke, but they soon blew over. I did not imagine, indeed, that Mr. Montagu, who has so much employment for his money in the North, had any considerable sum in his hands; but one's thoughts in a general calamity naturally run to those for whom one is most interested, whether they are likely to be engaged little or much. I had heard, with great pleasure, that the person whom I knew to be Mr. Pulteney's banker had not stopt payment, so I hoped he was safe, as I knew nothing of his connection with the Adams's.

I find it is absolutely settled, that Mr. Lyttelton is to have Mrs. Peach. Has the poor woman no friends to confine her in a dark room till the fit is

over? I suppose you will not remain many days in London; for a desert of brick houses is of all deserts the most deplorable. Do not break the head of your fine snuff box * before I see it on the cold marble, which has been the fate of every snuff box from gold enamel to plain holly, that you ever were possest of for the last fifteen years.

I cannot help mentioning to you, that in a letter which I lately received from Mrs. Chapone, she laments very feelingly her having never heard a word from you either before or since your going to Tunbridge. I beg my kind compliments to Mrs. Scott; and be so good to tell her I have lately seen advertised a geographical work, which seems to be upon a very large plan, and which I am afraid may interfere with her's. I forget in what paper it was.

Adieu, my dear friend. I am ever

Your most obliged, &c.

* This probably alludes to a gold snuff box which Mrs. Montagu was possessed of, on the lid of which was a miniature painting of Lord Bath, reckoned a very fine likeness; copied, unless the Editor mistakes, from a whole length portrait of him, by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

LETTER CXLVII.

Deal, *July* 10, 1772.

Besides the natural pleasure of conversing with you, my dear friend, a regard to your substance makes me chuse rather to thank you for your letter while you are in town, than to make you pay double postage for my said thanks at Sandleford. If you do not be speedy in sending me some manuscript which you deem sufficiently weighty for the four comely broad franks which you gave me, I shall certainly seize them for the conveyance of my own slim nonsense, which it grieves me to make you pay for so often.

I am truly grieved for the account which you send me of our friend. What a strange unhappy infatuation! One does not wonder that such people as Fordyce, who, from the beginning had nothing to lose, should, if no principle restrained them, hazard the fortune of others: but that a man of so much real property should have subjected it to such a hazard is amazing. I have never had any account of his concern in this affair, but from one person, who mentioned it as

 a report,

a report, and that it was likewise said, the difficulty would soon be over, and of no consequence in the end. I heartily wish this may be the case; but I fear whatever is lost must be irretrievable, so far as he is engaged with F. whose ruin seems not to be a wreck, but absolute foundering, and every thing embarked with him, *rapidus vorat agmine vortex.*

I hope the alarm you have been in about your poor little nephew, is entirely removed, and that he will get all alive and merry to accompany you to Sandleford. It is grievous that he is subject to such frequent attacks; but as he usually gets so soon over them, I hope it is a proof that the foundation is good. Pray would you not have been angry with him, if he had refused staying at Tunbridge a fortnight, when he was convinced it would have done him good, merely because he was tired to death of the place, and because he did not meet with the playthings that he liked*.

I am glad to find the Princess Amelia was pleased with her reception at Canterbury. It seems the master of the Red Lion paid great attention to her Royal Highness in her way to Walmer Castle, and waited on her part of her road, and in

* This is evidently a reply to a Letter of Mrs. Montagu, in which she had given the reasons which induced her to quit Tunbridge.

the

the return to his civility, she chose to sleep at his house in her return. I believe I mentioned to you, that a small tenement in this neighbourhood has been taken for her Royal Highness.

Mr. and Mrs. Pery embarked last week for Spa, so I imagine the Veseys do not go there, as it was reported they would this summer.

I congratulate you on the prospect of Lady Bell. Grey's marriage being so happily established. Indeed, there seems to be but one voice with regard to Lord Polworth's character. The more merit he has of his own, the more likely he will be to discover and value her's. I find he is to change his name, and live in England. All the intelligence I have gained of Mr. Hopton is, that he is a very clever man, and treats his bride with great affection; he is neither young nor handsome, but they appear very happy.

How could you raise my curiosity about Mr. H. Browne, without giving me the least hint upon what occasion you had read his name in the papers. Has he written a book, or has he married a wife, or what has he done, or any body done to him? for I am quite in the dark.

Adieu, my dear friend. May you enjoy all the beauties of the country in the luxury of perfect health and good spirits. I beg my compliments to Miss Gregory, and am ever,

Your most obliged, &c

LETTER CXLVIII.

Deal, *July* 22, 1772.

You are welcome, my dear friend, to your rural solitude, where I hope the birds of the air, and the flowers of the field, will repair all the fatigues which you endured from the interruption of human creatures at Tunbridge. To human creatures, however, it is to be hoped you will be tolerably well reconciled by the time they will claim your attention in London. You are very good in your present misanthropic state to express a wish for me. If you will sometimes admit my idea to your solitary entertainments, it will not much disturb your quiet. From a visit *en corps et en ame*, you are unluckily for me perfectly secure. If I had a post-chaise, and was perfectly at liberty to follow my own devices, it would not be possible for me to resist the temptation; but not having a post-chaise, and not being at liberty to follow my own devices, I must content myself with the knowledge of your being in health and spirits, in which I am very happy. If you were a sober economical gentlewoman, who disported yourself only with the notable amusement

amusement of flourishing with a tambour, I should be much more inclined to lament the weakness of your eyes, than I am at present; as I believe it will prove a salutary restraint on those intellectual riots in which you would too naturally be hurried, and which might lavish away all the health which you have been acquiring during the course of your penance at Tunbridge.

If you ever write to Colonel Dromgold, will you be so good as to present my compliments, and many thanks, for the present which I received on Saturday night, and which I suppose was sent by your direction. "Charles et Vilcourt" is exceedingly pretty. There is a charge against the English protestants in the notes *sur la gayeté*, which I do not recollect to have met with in any history, and which I hope is exaggerated by the sense of suffering. However, it is too certain that papists and protestants, high church and low, where they are merely party distinctions, belong to the same spirit, which is far enough from the spirit of the Gospel.

I am obliged to you for mentioning an event that is likely to prove of important service to Mr. P.; indeed I am glad for many others, who will probably be saved from great difficulties. One must rejoice at any favorable circumstance

for

for such as have been involved in this great calamity merely from want of caution. Wherever it appears to be roguery, robbery on the highway, compared with such extensive mischief, is innocence with regard to society. It is said that F. has carried off a large sum; if he does not appear, I suppose the charge is proved.

I am glad to find from the character of Mr. Lyttelton's lady, that if he has any sentiments of virtue left, he has an opportunity of retrieving a decent character. It is to be hoped he has made a due provision for the poor unhappy woman who has so long been the companion of his dissolute life.

I rejoice in the prosperous account of the Cambridges', and of dear good Lady F. and Mrs. Trevor. I hope Miss Baker is not in so unpromising a way as Lady Frances seems to apprehend. I had a letter not very long since from Lady L. Clayton, in which she gave quite a comfortable account of the child in all respects. Poor Lady Juliana, with the most uncomplaining resignation, is extremely low; and indeed Mrs. Penn's very restless and unhappy state of health prevents her turning her thoughts to any cheerful avocation from this melancholy subject. Her greatest present comfort, I believe, is the little girl, so that one cannot help feeling anxious for its life.

I know

I know not when your letter was writ, but I did not receive it till Sunday night, and was not well enough to write by Monday's post. Adieu, my dear friend. I am ever

Most faithfully, &c.

LETTER CXLIX.

Deal, *August* 5, 1772.

Your letter, my dear friend, delighted me by the good account you give of your own health, and moreover by that which you send me of dear Mrs. Talbot. The cheerful manner in which she passes her time is an honor to eighty-three, and a proof that her health is as good as all her friends wish it; and I hope it will please God to continue it, and her good spirits, to even a more advanced period of life *; for she is not yet by many years arrived to the term of my good Lady Dumond, who danced with Richard the Third, and continued in fine preservation till

* Mrs. Talbot did not die till her ninety-third year; and continued to correspond with Mrs. Carter occasionally till within a very few months of that advanced period.

Charles

Charles the Second *. At whatever age, one may always reasonably wish for the continuance of life to one's friends, while it can be continued with comfort to themselves, which, God be thanked, is her case; and I look forward with cheerful hope to seeing her next winter as cheerful, and well as she is now, and that is as long as I look forward for any thing.

I have not heard where Dr. Berkley is since his return from France; but I am told, I think from pretty good authority, that he is trying to get an exchange of preferment. His object is the Deanery of Ossory. It seems he is very desirous of going to Ireland. Ossory is said to be 500l. a-year. Was not Limerick which he refused nearly as much?

At present I have a house quite to myself, as my father is gone to Tunstal, to convey Miss Yardley to Deal, who is coming to bathe, and to stay some time with us. There is but very little company at Margate, I hear, this season. The terrible distress, occasioned by the failure of the bankers, has prevented the numbers who used to come from the city. Our proportion of company at Deal is much the same as usual: as we have

* For a curious account of this lady, and an enquiry into the fact here mentioned, see the late Lord Orford's "Historic Doubts."

no assembly-room, nor any other public diversions, we can never become a fashionable bathing-place, which is a very lucky circumstance for the natural inhabitants; for those who are in no way of business, must soon be half-starved, by an increasing dearness of provisions; and those who in the popular sense might be gainers, would derive but little real good, as what they might acquire in money, they would probably lose in honesty, from the exorbitant impositions practised in most public places. This is said to be one of the causes which has contributed to make Margate so empty.

I had a letter last night from Lady Dartrey, who has been ill, but she is, thank God, now much better: they are to leave Ireland before the end of this month, of which I am very glad, as Lord Dartrey's place, though by all accounts extremely beautiful, has too much water to be wholesome. Their dear little boy is going on most prosperously; he was left under the care of Lady Louisa Clayton, and he could not possibly be in better or safer hands.

Have you seen a reprehension, said in the papers to be sent to a Most Reverend, on the subject of routs at L——? I suppose it is not genuine, but I think well imitated. Such a reprehension might not be improper; but alas! it would

would not come with a good grace from him who pardoned the Kennedys', and who, it is said, discovers great inclination to pardon Captain I. If it be true, that there has been an examination before the Privy Council, it seems to me a more outrageous attempt against the laws, than almost any of those about which so much clamour has been raised.

Have you heard lately from our Sylph? I suppose you know the distressful situation she must have been in, from the accident which happened at Lucan, to poor good Mrs. Henry, who had the misfortune to break her leg. God be thanked, she is in as good a way now as her case will admit of, but her confinement is likely to be long; she was obliged to continue in the same posture for five weeks, and is not to be allowed to put her foot to the ground for at least two months longer. Mrs. Vesey wrote me word, that Mrs. Henry supported this calamity with so much patience and resignation, as was quite exemplary, and that she was the most cheerful person in the family.

I had a letter from Mrs. J. Pitt last post. Mrs. Dunbar has been daily expected from Ireland for some time, but was not then arrived; she expected Mrs. Fielding to make her a visit in her way from Plymouth, from which Mrs. J. Pitt hoped

hoped to convey her. They were going to make an excursion to Mount Edgcumbe. Mrs. Vesey proposes to come to England in October, on which I congratulate you, who probably will be the better for her arriving before January, though I shall not. I had a letter by this day's post from Mrs. Henry, who confirms the good accounts I have already mentioned; she says the surgeon thinks she might be moved the end of September, but she will remain at Lucan till October for fear of accidents. It is impossible to seem more cheerful and more grateful for her recovery, although she says it will be many months before she must attempt to use her leg. Adieu, my dear friend. May God in his mercy guard you and me from such calamitous accidents, or enable us to support them like this good woman.

LETTER CL.

Deal, *August* 18, 1772.

In the persuasion that you was disporting yourself at Nuneham, I was very quiet and unalarmed at not hearing from you. I grieve to find you were so much less agreeably engaged.

I long

I long to know whether your illness was brought on by the natural perverseness of the disorder, or whether you have presumed too much on the effects of Tunbridge, and ventured on a greater degree of application, than is consistent with newly-recovered health. I heartily wish the latter may be the case, as a little more caution may prevent the progress of the evil. It is a great pity, that instead of a weak stomach, you had not had a weak head, which would effectually frustrate you in every improper exertion.

I congratulate you on the pleasure of a visit from Mrs. Scott and Miss Cutts. I do not wonder at the encomiums you hear on the life of D'Aubigné *. It will, I am persuaded, make great progress next winter. It was published too late to make any great noise this year, as it could not for that reason be so generally read as it deserves. I persuaded my father, who has no great taste for modern books, to read it, and he was extremely pleased with it.

On casting up the account at the end of each day, every thinking mind must experience the feeling which you so well express, and very dangerous is the security that does not experience it. None but the hardened or the thoughtless can rest

* Written by Mrs. Scott, and generally thought a very excellent as well as entertaining work.

satisfied

satisfied with their own performances. Every advance in goodness will serve to shew how little has been done, compared with what still remains to do *; and the deficiency of human virtue will appear in the strongest light, in proportion to our study of that unerring rule, from which, in some instance or other, it so perpetually deviates. Yet the bright exemplar must ever be placed within view of the mind, and the whole of our business here is to make as near approach as possible to the object, which we cannot, with all our best endeavours, ever reach. Amidst the impediments of mortal existence, though we can never hope to attain perfection, we have capacities for continual improvement, and provided an endeavour for that be persevering and sincere, a merciful provision is made for its defects.

Nothing can be more just than your distinction between what is "called a virtuous person towards the world, and what constitutes merit in the eye of him who knows us," though heaven forbid it

* "Nil vetum reputans dum quid superesset agendum," might be adopted as a Christian rule, if St. Paul had not taught us one far better: *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after—I press toward the mark for the prize.* It is impossible to read Mrs. Carter's Letters without observing from what high authority her morality has been derived.

should

should be applicable to yourself! It is indeed very possible to live in an exact observance of moral and social duties, so far as respects a popular character, and yet be totally void of real virtue. All external performances derive their true value, with respect to the soul, from the disposition from which they proceed, with regard to the Supreme Being *. Wherever his will and his approbation are made the supreme object, all talents, all opportunities, however different in their appearances, become equal possibilities for the acquirement of virtue and of happiness. The most insignificant action, the most unobserved motion of the mind, upon this principle, become great and important, and extend their consequences to eternity; while the most splendid effects, that are produced from merely human or selfish motives, vanish into nothing, and are lost in the chaos of succeeding events.

I am summoned away in the midst of my dissertation to dress for dinner at my brother's, so

* "Hic murus alienus esto!" Mrs. Carter's wisdom and piety perceived, and led her constantly to affirm, in direct contradiction of the opinion of many ancient, and some even modern philosophers, that there is no standard of right and wrong but the will of God, and that no actions are good or evil, but as they proceed from the desire of pleasing, or the dread of offending him.

you

you are delivered from my preaching for the present. Adieu, my dearest friend. I hope your next will bring me an account of your being perfectly well. Remember I positively interdict long letters even to yours, &c. &c.

LETTER CLI.

Deal, *September* 21, 1772.

As you do not mention, my dear friend, how long your *sejour* at Nuneham is to last, I know not when you may be likely to receive my letter; however I will write, that it may be ready to wait on you at your return, and I may be the sooner entitled to the pleasure of hearing from you.

By all that one has ever read of Pascal, I believe his character was very respectable; but from the few extracts which I have seen of his *Pensées*, (which have been just enough to determine me never to read the book) he seems to me a dangerous author to all kinds of readers. The inconsiderate and the profane will triumph in a scheme of religion inconsistent with common sense; and the pious and devout may be led into

such unreasonable and unnecessary scruples, as will deprive them of all the present comforts of a good conscience, and terrify others out of all the benefit that might be derived from their example. None, except those whose duty it is to confute them, ought to have so much confidence in their own virtue, as to allow themselves in the study of bad books; a very few have sufficient strength of mind, not in some way or other to be hurt by great numbers of what are called *good* books. I am sure you will not conclude from this, that I am setting all serious reading at defiance. Heaven forbid! But indeed it is most devoutly to be wished, that people would make their Bible their principal study, and determine upon the merits of all other religious books by their conformity to this unerring standard*. It was not in any chapter of the New Testament, that poor Pascal found a direction for wearing a spiked girdle. Such absurd and uncommanded austerities, when practised by sincerely good people, may be no further hurtful to themselves, than by depriving

* But it is this very circumstance which makes the great difference between Protestants of all descriptions and Roman Catholics, and which Pascal therefore did not believe. For, as Chillingworth justly asserts, the Bible is the religion of Protestants; but with Roman Catholics, the opinion of the Church has at least equal weight with the Bible.

them

them of all the reasonable and allowed enjoyments of this world; but the authorities of such examples may be fatally dangerous to others of a different character, who will be led to think they may substitute the voluntary infliction of external sufferings, instead of that true Christian mortification, which consists in correcting the internal disorders of the heart, and in opposing every inclination, which is contrary to the duties of a strictly regulated life; a task more difficult to human depravity, than all the corporeal hardships of ascetic discipline. It is astonishing to reflect, what a monstrous fabric of absurdities, enthusiasm and superstition have erected on that simple plan, which the divine wisdom has proposed in the Gospel, for the improvement of nature, and the direction of our conduct. If the perverseness of mankind could contrive to throw such a cloud of error over this heavenly illumination, how little could be expected from those who wandered through the darkness of heathen ignorance, without the assistance of any external revelation to direct their steps! Yet such as sincerely wished to find the right path, were no doubt secretly conducted, so as not to be fatally misled from their end. I know not well how to charge Xenophon with superstition. His whole conduct proved that he did not mean to

substitute empty ceremonies as a compensation for the omission of real virtue; but seems in a spirit of sincere piety, to have endeavoured by such helps as he could find, to discover the signification of the Divine will, with a real intention of following its guidance.—You will wish I had set up a clepsydra, and made a laudable resolution not to outrun it *.

I must have expressed myself in some strange unintelligible manner, to make you draw such a conclusion from what I said about Capt. I——. I know very well, that the King has an absolute right of pardoning. The point which appeared to me so dangerous was that the Privy Council should intermeddle with a decision of law †. The judge was the proper person to recommend to mercy, and it was asserted, that he had declared

* It is not probable that Mrs. Montagu was of this opinion; and if any serious reader should think this letter too long, the Editor will be equally surprized and disappointed.

† Perhaps Mrs. Carter is here a little mistaken in her notion of the King's legal prerogative. It is believed that the King can exercise no act of authority, but by and with the advice of his Privy Council; for this obvious reason, that as he, personally, can do no wrong, some person or persons must be responsible for what he does. Consequently if it is in his contemplation to grant a pardon, the case must first be argued in the Privy Council.

himself

himself perfectly well satisfied with the sentence. As I pay very little regard to newspaper accounts, I mentioned it to you, who, I thought, might have some better intelligence, and I wished to have the story of the council contradicted; as it appeared to me, that their counteracting a judge and jury, in a case too, in which there seemed to be no pretence that any party prejudice had influenced the sentence, was a most dangerous attack upon the laws. This was not the case with regard to the act of pardon, which is no attack upon the laws of England: how far it may be, in this instance, conformable to a higher law, depends on the circumstances of the case. I most perfectly agree with you, in all you say against the least favor being shown, where there are reasons for suspicion of such a crime, or indeed of any other.

My sister Carter, I think I told you, has a fit of the gout, in defiance of her own abstemiousness and Dr. Cadogan's system; they are to go to Bath in November, after making two or three visits in Berkshire. My father, after whom you so kindly enquire, is, thank God, remarkably well, and has not had a bad attack of gravel since he has taken Dr. Heberden's lixivium. All our friends, in all parts of the world, whenever I have heard of them, were well. The Dunbars

not

not yet arrived. Mrs. Fielding is at Encombe, where she is to stay till she comes to town with the Pitts, in November.

I am happy in your intention of exerting those endeavours, which will certainly be beneficial to yourself, whatever their effect may be, with regard to others; as they will be the discharge of an important duty, and the noblest application of those powers, for which you are so singularly indebted to heaven. I too well know how little reason there is, in such cases, to depend upon absolute success; but something may be done, if not all, and the smallest improvement in virtue and happiness is worth an attempt. And some improvement in tolerably reasonable and amiable minds, will, I believe, always be effected by a calm and judicious treatment of the subject, whenever it comes recommended by those who discover themselves deeply affected by a sense of its importance, and are influenced by it in the tenor of their lives.

I cannot tell any thing about your sermons, only that Mrs. Talbot heard what I said to you about them, when we were in Surrey, I think, but when I come to town, I will make a more particular enquiry. I am quite scandalized to find such flourishing paragraphs about the thunder and lightning storm, from other parts of the coast,

coast, and no mention made of its violence here; and yet the good people of Deal, were as heartily terrified, as the fine ladies and gentlemen could possibly be, in the assembly room at Margate. God be thanked, the fright was the only mischief. I have been told that the sailors in the Downs expected every minute to see the town in flames; but all very happily ended in the stripping of a tree near this house. Adieu, my dearest friend.

LETTER CLII.

Deal, *October* 20, 1772.

It is strange that I should feel a kind of satisfaction in seeing your letter dated from Hill-street, for you certainly are in reality, as effectually absent from me, as if you were at the Land's End. But one is apt to think any good more within one's reach, in proportion as it is less distant; not considering that the point is determined by one's own position.

It is no wonder that the *tintamarre* of so many babbling foreigners should have been terrible to a quiet

a quiet English country gentlewoman, so little accustomed to the clatter and bustle of the great world; and it is no wonder you should run away from it, frightened out of your wits. Seriously, however, I am sorry there happened any circumstance to render your visit to Nuneham, less agreeable than it might have been.

I honor the true fortitude with which you committed your dear little nephew, to the same protection on which you relied for your own preservation. God be thanked, it did no mischief here by land, and we saw nothing of the mischief this terrible storm did by sea, as the violence of the wind blew the ships out of the Downs. You mention only Thursday night, but it was nearly, if not equally strong, the night before. The papers give terrible accounts of the damage in town. It is to be hoped, the number of lives lost, that are there mentioned, is not true. I heartily wish you the utmost success in your scheme for your nephew; indeed, by all I ever heard of that school, there is great care taken of the children. In the very best, there must be some hazard from the contagion of any set of human creatures assembled together.

I have heard from Mrs. Dunbar since she landed, but she did not mention any design of going

going to Encombe. Happily, she landed just before the storm, and had a very fine passage. I had a letter from Mrs. Vesey, in which she appears very much distrest and alarmed about Mrs. Hancock, but I hope her tenderness renders her more apprehensive than is necessary. She says, she is quite well, but very doubtful of her voyage to England, which would give one more concern, if our dear Sylph was not so ingenious at difficulties and little distresses. Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Robinson, and their son and daughter, called on me the other day; your niece is become a very fine girl indeed; I never saw any one so much improved.

I am very sorry to hear of the consternation occasioned by another failure. Surely necessity will at last, render this infatuated nation more wise. Trade has, for some time, been losing the nature of commerce, and has been converted into mere gambling; it is dreadful to think on the distress brought on individuals by these bankruptcies: but I suppose, with regard to the general sum of wealth in the kingdom, it is just the same; though shocking are the mischiefs of such an interrupted and irregular circulation. I know very well that the Privy Council can do none of the things which you mention. If they could, their interposition would not be improper.

In

In the instance of Jenkins *, the examination was made into a matter of fact, which had not been proved or decided;—so much for this subject.

I am reading Pere Rapin's works, which I think I never before went regularly through. His comparison betwixt Demosthenes and Cicero, seems to me most admirable. But he is much too cold a critic to be equally successful wherever his subject is poetry. He well understands the mechanical part, and his comparison between the fable of Homer and Virgil, is, I believe very just. It may be easy enough for any industrious head to measure by scale and compass the ichnography of a poem; but it requires a poetic genius to judge of the beauties of the elevation. However, Rapin is a respectable and useful writer, and appears to have studied the ancients with a very particular degree of application, which renders him on many accounts, very instructive, though his imagination is too much chilled by the petrific genius of Aristotle, to leave him any true poetical feeling.

* Alluding probably to the Captain Jenkins whose loss, or supposed loss, of his ears, in some measure occasioned the Spanish war. It is to this that Pope alludes,

"And owns the Spaniard did a waggish thing,
Who cropt his ears, and sent them to the King."

We

We had some rain here, the latter end of the harvest, but only for a short continuance; but people seemed to think it would hurt the barley; in general there has been such a succession of fine weather, as I do not remember for many years, and it is now so very warm, that I have never thought of having a fire, not even before the sun was risen or after he was set. The excessive dews keep the verdure perfectly fresh, and the country is beautiful to the highest degree. It is indeed very grievous, that the wheat should fail, after so promising an appearance, and after so beautiful a summer. I heartily wish for the verification of your prediction of reform in expence next winter; but indeed there seems to be such a madness of extravagance in too many, as will continue as long as they have a shilling of their own, and any degree of credit with others, and which nothing but absolute starving can cure. I know not what good eatable things, the smugglers may import to other parts of the coast, but I hear of nothing here but tea and brandy, and prohibited cloathing, which is bought up with a scandalous degree of eagerness, by people of fashion and people of fortune, who either come or send commissions from all quarters.

Poor Miss Munro, to think of marrying for little

little other purpose than to alter the inscription on her coffin! I hope, however, she has disposed of herself in such a way as to be supplied with tolerable conveniencies for the short time which by your account, she is likely to need them. I am happy to receive such an account of your health. My head, I thank you, has, for the last two months, been good for nothing, and I am, upon the whole not worth talking about.

You will not think I can easily forget to form my most ardent wishes, my more than wishes, for very many happy returns of this day, on which Heaven bestowed so great a blessing on me. May you find the latest period of a long life of virtue, resembling this fine autumnal season, which, after the fermentation of spring, and the glowing spirit of summer have performed the active services of the year, softens into tranquillity, and enjoys the cheering light and warmth of tempered sunshine, without its heat, and without its blaze. Adieu, my dearest friend. I am,

Ever yours, &c.

LETTER CLIII.

Deal, *October* 29, 1772.

My dear Friend,

In the hope that the same divine goodness which bestows the blessing of riches, will direct you to a proper application of it, I do most heartily rejoice in the prosperous account which you kindly give me of your success. May health and cheerful spirits give you every reasonable enjoyment of it in this life, and may a faithful discharge of the stewardship, secure you a good foundation for that which is to come!

By some instances which one sees of those who come *out* of the University, I should hope my nephew* has sufficient learning to get *in*. I believe he is a tolerable scholar, and would have been a very good one, if his miserable health had not so often rendered him totally incapable of application. My brother much promoted his going very early to the University, which he thinks, on many accounts, a great advantage. He succeeds Mr. Charles Fox in his

* Her eldest nephew, long since dead.

rooms at College*, but I hope not in his genius, even if it was to be accompanied by all the unaccounted millions of his father.

What fearful work among the city patriots! Wilkes has never appeared so little, as in the peevish disappointment which he expresses on his rejection. Alas, alas! are such men as he, or his colleagues, the people to save a nation? We may, and I believe do suffer, from the wrong practices of the court, but our great misfortune is the want of virtue in the opposition.

I had a letter lately from our dear Mrs. Vesey. She gives a good account of Mrs. Hancock, and talks of undertaking her voyage this month. She will, I hope, however, wait till calmer weather. She is, God be thanked, unhurt by an accident which threatened the most alarming consequences. As she was going to her cottage, in a *cabriolé*, in a narrow pass, betwixt some trees and the river, her horse, "*sans rime ni raison*," fell a kicking and plunging with one leg over the bank. How she scrambled out, she cannot tell, but by some means or other, most providentially for herself and us, she escaped the danger, with no other mischief than being scratched. Her letter was written just after the accident; with

* Hertford College, Oxford.

the

the mercy of her escape, she seemed most deeply and properly affected. Poor Mrs. Hancock saw the whole transaction from a window; and one may easily guess with what terror. Indeed it is terrible to think of the probable consequences which might have attended such an accident; and we have great reason to be thankful for the confirmation of our hopes of seeing our friend amongst us this winter. Not long since, I was most dreadfully alarmed by an account of my sister Harry Carter's being thrown from her horse, and so much hurt in her head, that at first it was apprehended to be a fracture; a sad circumstance to the mother of five little children. But I thank God, it did not turn out so lamentable a calamity, and she is now tolerably well recovered, though it was, I believe, ten days before she could be got home, from the place where the accident happened. We expect her and her family here before Christmas. My sister Carter had an attack of the gout, as soon as she arrived at Bath; it was very civil to wait till she got there; she is better, but not yet well enough to go to the Rooms.

We have six Dutch East-Indiamen in the Downs, who have several English sailors on board, whom it seems, it is a practice in Holland, to kidnap or seduce on board their ships, carry them

them to India, and never suffer them to come back. Sixteen of them have already been rescued by a man-of-war now in the Downs, and a general search is to be made, as it is supposed there are many more. Probably our good allies are not very well pleased to have their prey snatched from them. However no resistance has yet been made. This English man-of-war is just returned with Lord Cathcart from Russia. Mrs. Douglas had a good deal of discourse with one of the lieutenants about the Czarina, who is remarkably gracious to all the English. Pray, did not you imagine this same Czarina to be a fearful, stout, two-handed gentlewoman? If you did, rectify your error; she is about the heighth of Mrs. Douglas, only rather plumper. I believe all our officers were at the Russian court, but when the ships stopt at Copenhagen, not any one person went to court there.

You may rest assured your letter shall not transpire. Heaven forbid, that I should be instrumental in depriving this poor woman of any encouragement that might conduce to her return to virtue. The two people whom I have mentioned are in a situation that may help to introduce her to a better society, than that with which in general, she seems to have been connected, which, I fancy has chiefly been the rabble of

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the fashionable world, which have furnished her neither with an adviser nor a friend. Her daughter is with her, and she seems to have the utmost attention paid to her education. She came hither on the account of one of her sons, who bathes in the sea. Between seeing her at home, and meeting her at other places, I have been in her company about half a dozen times. Her understanding seems to be good, and her manners are pleasing, and her whole behaviour perfectly modest and proper; so, I hope, poor soul, if she falls into good hands, she may be recovered to virtue, and in some degree, to reputation. She leaves this place in a few days. I believe there are few situations so dangerous to a handsome young woman, as the connections into which she is thrown in a military life. Much of her time is past in the society of a set of men whose manners are too polite and decent to alarm suspicion, and whose principles are, for the most part, too licentious not to be extremely dangerous to an unguarded mind, in which the awful restraints of virtue become insensibly relaxed, and the passions have gained possession before their approach has been felt, or even suspected.

I hope you will have a pleasant excursion to Lord N——'s, and may your visit be as beneficial as it is in your power to make it. Indeed,

here will be a noble exercise for that superiority of understanding by which you must always be useful in some degree, whenever you exert it; and to be useful even in the least degree, on such a subject, is worth all your exertion of those powers and that eloquence, which, when you please, are irresistible. I need not explain what I mean; and I know you will forgive the zeal and fidelity of that friendship and affection, which must, at all times, lead me to remind you of the application of those distinguished talents of every kind, for which you are so awfully accountable.

Adieu, my dear friend, do not harass yourself with writing to me, till you return to town. I shall not be uneasy at your silence, when I can account for it. I am ever yours, &c.

LETTER CLIV.

Deal, *November* 28, 1772.

It was a pity, my dear friend, that such mere earth-born cares, should interrupt your sentimental pleasures; but upon mere sentiment one should quickly starve, and our meta-

physical

physical concerns must condescend to borrow the aid of material objects for their subsistence. I hope your bills are all safely arrived and safely deposited. To a right and well-regulated mind, so much money is so much virtue.

I have felt rather fretful with what Rapin says of our favorite Tacitus; I fear the more fretful, because I could not help allowing some part of his censure to be just. I cannot help thinking, however, that he forms much too severe a judgment of his moral character, from the turn of his writings. When the good father finds fault with him for censuring his neighbours; he seems to have forgot by what kind of neighbours poor Tacitus was surrounded, and of what kind of times he recorded the transactions.

That he appears to be a fatalist is, indeed, too true; but if even the Psalmist could be staggered, when he saw "the wicked in such prosperity," and could find no solution of his difficulties, but in the "house of the Lord:" there ought to be great allowances made to unassisted reason, confounded by the view of such a singularly disordered state of things, as appeared under the execrable tyranny of the Roman Emperors. Rapin seems to think, that Tacitus exaggerated the wickedness of the times he describes; but, I believe

lieve, Suetonius, in the dull matter of fact way of relation, gives to the full as bad an account. The drawing is the same, only that the picture receives a stronger coloring from the superior genius of Tacitus; and, perhaps, it strikes with an additional force, from its being animated by what he felt.

I had a letter lately from Mrs. Henry, in which a trait of our Sylph is mentioned, which as usual discovers the goodness of her heart, and the uncommon turn of her head. The surgeon had desired, that when Mrs. Henry was able to walk, she should never venture to use crutches upon a floor, for fear of their slipping; but should be carried down stairs, and use them on the gravel walk. On this information up started Mrs. Vesey, and said she would order the gardener immediately to gravel the drawing-room, which being near Mrs. Henry's bed-room, might give her a walk whenever she pleased, without danger or trouble; and this she proposed, not in jest, but with the utmost gravity and seriousness. Only think of gravelling a room up stairs! who could have had such a thought but Mrs. Vesey! Mrs. Henry speaks with the greatest pleasure and gratitude, of the very kind and affectionate attention, which the whole family had paid her during her confine-

confinement. She is now got to Dublin, and speaks with certainty of the Veseys' coming to England, but she mentions next month.

Did you see the eclipse of the moon? and do you ever see the moon eclipsed without a sigh for the memory of poor Nicias? there are few characters, I think, in ancient history, which interest one more tenderly than his, from that peculiarly soft melancholy tincture, which his virtues receive from his misfortunes. Among the innumerable advantages of true religion, a very considerable one is its freeing the mind from the terrors of superstition, which, in so many instances, have confounded the understanding of the wise, and sunk the spirits of the good. The particular species of superstition which ruined Nicias*, was of a very ancient date, and the voice of a prophet was employed to warn the people of God, not to be "dismayed by the signs "of the heavens†."

If there was any very considerable degree of modesty in those who can confidently assert, that

* See his Life in Plutarch, with the account of this circumstance.

† The passage is very striking in its application to this story: "Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dis-"mayed at the signs of the heaven, for the heathen are dis-"mayed at them." Jeremiah x. 2.

the

the present superiority of knowledge is effected by their own reasonings, such instances of human weakness, as are to be found in ancient history, in men so much wiser and better than themselves, might prove the illumination to be derived from a higher source.

I am obliged to you for mentioning the Duchess of Portland's well-timed generosity to poor Mr. B——. It does one good to hear of such instances, and strengthens one's love of human nature, which is sometimes in danger of growing too weak, perhaps unjustly, and merely from not knowing how many kind and generous actions there are, to counterbalance the hard-heartedness which can never be concealed.

A fearful, turbulent November indeed! yesterday was so calm and pleasant, that I hoped the moon, which looked so sweet and smiling into my window, had brought peace and quietness to the elements in this quarter. But to-day all is storm and uproar. I am sitting in view of the dashing waves, which make a most noble appearance. But, alas, where is our dear Sylph! I do not indulge myself with brooding over terrors, but I shall rejoice to hear that she has crost St. George's Channel, and is safely fixed in Bolton Row. I am sure you will not delay to give me as speedy an account as possible of her arrival; for, by a

letter

letter just received, there is every reason to fear she is now on her journey: God send she may be safe, I long much to be assured of it.

By the meeting of Parliament, I suppose London is in full society, in which however I hope you will not engage to the extent of your present health, but always keep a reserve of quiet and spirits, that may help you to persevere through the winter. I imagine most of my friends have got to town. By a letter from Mrs. Talbot I am glad to find she is fixed in her winter quarters. I was quite broken hearted about her some time ago, as she was grown so deaf, that she could hear nothing but by a trumpet, and even with that assistance very imperfectly. But it has pleased God, that she now hears again very well, a most wonderful mercy at her age, for which she is very thankful indeed, and so am I for her sake. It was very grievous to think that this good woman, who is so nobly disposed to enjoy every blessing, after the loss of one so distinguished, should be deprived of the comfort of conversation and books, to which so great a part of her day was indebted for its amusement.

Adieu, my dear friend, take care of yourself, and do not write but when it is quite convenient to your health and leisure, for as I have the pleasure of knowing you are so near me, I shall be less

solicitous

solicitous than when you were at a distance, from whence I could never hear any thing of you from any body else.

LETTER CLV.

Deal, *December* 20, 1772.

You have formed a very animated, as well as a very true picture, my dear friend, of the heterogeneous assemblies of our Sylph. The singular art, by which she produces the effects which you so well describe, certainly depends upon the singularity of her character, which I apprehend to be a matter of deep investigation, and made up of a great variety of particulars. One means by which she preserves so many naturally jarring characters, as compose her motley crowd, from quarrelling with each other, is by contriving to put them all into perfect good humour with themselves; and wherever this is the case, all external war is at an end. As, upon these occasions, our Sylph has not a grain of vanity, nor the least degree of merely personal feelings; she has an infinite deal of attention to bestow, in adapting herself to the feelings of others;

others; and thus, without any appearance of flattery, of effort, or of design, she accomplishes the point of making each of the individuals with whom her blue room is crowded, consider itself as a principal and distinguished object; and wherever people can imagine themselves to possess the first place, they will always be in wonderful good humour with all the world about them.

It is certainly very laudable, and very useful to introduce "divine truths by the dexterity of "human wisdom," but my objection was to the trickeries of human cunning. I cannot perfectly agree with you in the difference between these two great men; for I cannot help thinking that Dr. Secker, in point of masterly reasoning and understanding, has greatly the superiority; and with regard to learning, his was more universal, and more critical, than that of any person I ever knew. The fault which strikes me in Dr. Sherlock, is not so much in his attempts to prove the general truths of the Gospel, as in finding a meaning for some particular passages, so very ingenious and *recherchi*, as tends very much to weaken the plain and natural sense; and if such a method was generally pursued, I think it would throw the whole Scriptures into confusion. There are some objections of this kind to be made to another

another very admired, and, in many instance I believe, a very admirable writer, Dr. Heylin.

As to the good people of Bristol and Liverpool, &c. &c. and of all other places of trade and commerce, one Evangelist will probably do just as well as another. They have too much common sense, to be speculative unbelievers; and too much worldly business, to be practical Christians. Do not think me uncharitable, there are no doubt very many particular exceptions, but such will be the general tendency of such a *train de vie*. The most hopeless of conviction are to be found among the people of vacant life, reasoning—not reasonable—heads, and regular conduct, too highly conceited of human understanding, to think it needs any assistance; and too well satisfied with human virtue, to think it wants any forgiveness. But God be thanked you are a Christian, and I may as well reserve my speculations, if there is any use in them, for those who are not *.

* Should any such read these Letters, it is to be earnestly hoped that they will attend to this, and many other passages of the like import in them. Without humility of mind, Christianity can neither be felt nor understood. "Seest "thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope "of a fool than of him."

What

What do you politicians in town think of the secret committee, and the fifty thousand pounds which is to be spent upon it? We in the country grumble and groan. Indeed, there is so much iniquity in the whole affair, that I can hope no good from an inquiry about it, while there will certainly be no reparation made to the poor injured people of Hindostan, whom we have so vilely and scandalously plundered and oppresst, and are now quarrelling about the division of the spoil.

On Saturday evening we had one of the most dreadful storms I ever saw, which threw the whole place into consternation. Such flashes, or rather such a continued stream of blue lightning, I do not recollect ever to have seen, and there was one such burst of thunder, as threw some people on the ground, and others into faintings and fits. I cannot help thinking, however, that those who conceived themselves to be knocked down by the thunder, fell merely by the sudden start of their own terrors, or there would have been some less equivocal proof of its power. I thank God no mischief was done here, which was very providential, considering the extreme violence of the lightning; my eyes have scarcely yet recovered its effect. I should have been much more alarmed if I had known the danger to which my brother

was

was exposed, who was out on horseback in the worst of it; and, though he has fewer fears than any body I know, he told me he thought he never should have reached home. However, I thank God, both he and his servant arrived safely through it*.

What have you gone and published four Sermons, and never sent them to me? I have just now received the information in a letter, and am questioned about its truth.

It is now fixed that I am to go to Tunstal on Saturday, and hope Monday or Tuesday following to be in London; I cannot tell which, as my motions do not so much depend on myself, as on Dr. Pennington's horses, who are to convey me, and I therefore know not how fast I shall travel.—Adieu, my dear friend, I hope very soon to assure you, *de vive voix*, of my being most faithfully yours, &c.

* No man was ever more free from fear than Mr. Carter was, but the Editor has often heard him speak of this storm as being peculiarly terrific, and that his servant was dreadfully frightened. He described the lightning as reminding him of one of the Egyptian plagues, when *the fire ran along upon the ground.*

LETTER CLVI.

Henley, *May* 27, 1773.

After many moral and economical calculations on the intrinsic value of three pence, and the proportion it bears to that of the information of a friend not being drowned, having at last determined on a small preference in favor of the latter, I am in consequence set down to acquaint you, that, after all the lamentable accounts of so many floods, I am arrived at Henley without incurring any perils by water, or, I thank God, any other whatever. Indeed there was so little appearance of any danger of this sort, that I cannot account for the kind apprehensions of some of my friends, but upon that most admirable system of French philosophy, which has so clearly and irrefragably proved, that the general and predominant terror of all the men, women, and children, that have ever lived in all ages, and in all countries, has been the constant expectation of a Deluge.

The few lucid intervals which disclosed the prospect between Maidenhead and Henley, gave me reason to regret the unfavorable sky, which allowed

allowed me to see so little of it. What I could discover reminded me of the views about Chatham and Rochester. The difference here, indeed, is that the Thames wanders along in all the playfulness, of youth and idleness, while there the Medway marches on with an air of business and importance, incumbered with the weight of fleets and navies, which it must be confessed, are not well adapted to the careless beauties of an Arcadian scene.

I hope to get in good time to Wittenham tomorrow; it is not above sixteen miles from hence, but the latter part of the road, I believe, is very indifferent, which will of course retard my motions. I could wish for a few days of sunshine for my little excursion; but my business is to see my brother and sister, and I shall endeavour to consider the weather as only a circumstance, and get into good humour accordingly. I hope you are disposed to be so with this letter. Indeed, be it ever so dull, it is no fault of mine; for, as another French philosopher in the short compass of ninety pages has, as I am told, accurately demonstrated the same temperament of sky, which is particularly favorable to the growth of cabbages, is downright poison to the human genius; now one cannot, I think, imagine a day more propitious to the growth of cabbages than

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the present; and the inference naturally follows. I know not whether this philosopher has extended his system to the heart; whether he has, or not, in defiance of all systems, I feel mine to be most faithfully,

Yours, &c.

LETTER CLVII.

Deal, *June* 5, 1773.

My dear Friend,

It was not till after the post was gone out yesterday, that I arrived at the end of my journey; I stayed two days at Tunstal, and found my sister and the family quite well. Your godson mighty happy at having discovered in a magazine something which calls itself your character. You will approve his being the most delighted with that part of it, which mentions your having given away the profits of the Essay to a widow in distress. He desires me to send his duty to you. In walking about Canterbury yesterday, I unexpectedly met my brother, and as we were going through the cloisters, on seeing him pull off his hat, and speak in passing to a lady,

lady, I asked who she was, and who should it be, but Miss Frensham, whom my short-sighted eyes had not discovered, and for this time she was equally blind, and knew neither my brother nor me. When I found out who she was, I ran after her; she is quite well, and she is to set out to-day with Mrs. Berkley to conduct young Berkley to France.

I had sundry invitations to dine at Canterbury, which to be sure I had full time to do; but I was impatient to get home, and by no means in spirits, as I had heard from my brother that poor Mrs. Primrose died the day before, and I wanted to get to Mrs. Underdown; I was so happy as to find her in a state of composure and resignation, for which her friends have the more reason to be thankful, as her nerves and spirits are liable to terrible agitations, and her health has suffered much by her sister's long illness, of which she foresaw the danger long before any body else; and poor thing she has for so many weeks been in such a miserable state, that her life was very uncomfortable to herself, which should help to reconcile her friends to the conclusion of it. Yet under all circumstances, the loss of any one with whom one has been long connected must be severely felt. My spirits are low, and they would have been much lower had I returned two or three

three days sooner, as I should have deemed it right to do, had I had an idea Mrs. Primrose was so near her end; I knew the helpless state she was in, but had hoped to see her once more; now all my care must be employed for my dear Mrs. Underdown.

I lay at Dartford the night I left London, and was waked by the thunder, which was very loud there, remarkably so, as it was evidently at a distance from the length of the intervals from the lightning. I see by the papers it was much more violent in town; very violent it must have been, wherever it exerted its greatest force.

I long to know how you do, and what you do; probably by this time you are arrived at Sandleford, at least to judge by my own feelings, I hope so. There is something so uncomfortable in the general dispersion at this season, that I am always glad when I am got quietly settled in my summer retreat, where I can think at leisure on the hopes of meeting my friends again, which cannot so easily be effected at the moment of parting with them. Alas, how long must we look forward to the prospect of seeing our dear Sylph again. Such distant views perhaps may seem absurd for beings of an hour; yet hope serves to keep us in cheerfulness and good humour, and provided the mind is furnished with

general principles of resignation, may allowably be indulged. No one, I believe, ever supported a disappointment the better for anticipation.

Be so good as to make my compliments to Dr. and Mrs. Beattie, I shall be very glad to hear that the endeavours of his friends have succeeded; but he does not seem to me, to have taken the road to court favor*, and I cannot help having a much stronger dependence on a contribution from the private friends of christianity and virtue. Adieu, my dear friend, let me hear from you soon; I do not wish for a long letter, it will be quite long enough to please me, if it assures me you are well, and think kindly of

Yours, &c.

* Mrs. Carter was, however, mistaken. Dr. Beattie in this year obtained a pension of 200l. a year. His reception in London was also most gratifying, as well as merited. Dr. Johnson says of him, in a letter to Mr. Boswell, of July 5, 1773, "Beattie is so caressed, and invited, and treated, and liked, and flattered by the great, that I can see nothing of him."

Boswell's Life of Johnson, 5th Ed. vol. 2.

LETTER CLVIII.

Deal, *June* 12, 1773.

It gives me great pleasure to think, my dear friend, that you are escaped from the joyless hurry and heat of London, and are at this minute drinking your tea at Sandleford, in your dressing room, fanned by the breath of zephyrs, and serenaded by the songs of nightingales, and thinking on all your friends dispersed over the globe by the restless, but beautiful spirit of summer. For the present, perhaps, you are mighty well contented to converse with them, *tout a votre aise*, in mere idea; and it may be some time before you are sufficiently satisfied with quiet and green trees, to begin to anticipate the winter months of social life. Alas, for us, that there can be no hope of the dear Sylph, with her delightful spirit of innocent irregularity to enliven the prospect of this scene. You may be sure of my hearty amen to your prayer. Indeed such long interruptions of our best pleasures in so short a life would be equally grievous and unaccountable, if the glad hope of being again united to that "general assembly," which is

placed beyond the reach of mortal accidents, did not reconcile us to the imperfections of our present enjoyments.

I do not wonder that Lady N—— should not seem very fond of the prospect of going to Ireland. The society can hardly be so agreeable to her as that to which she has been accustomed in England; and her situation there cannot entitle her to any of those popular distinctions, by which the gratification of ambition, if she has any, might compensate the loss of pleasure. I have a notion there were some mistaken ideas formed upon this subject at first, which have probably since been confuted. But of all this I am not absolutely sure. One cannot help pitying poor Lord N——, whose social good humour would find more pleasure in talking with Mrs. Denoyer, and promoting her interest, than in figuring at a court, even where his father acts as the king.

As poor Dr. Beattie was to ask for a pension, I am very glad there is a prospect of his success; but that genius and virtue like his should be under the necessity of *asking* for any thing in the power of those who have rewards to bestow, is too strong a justification of all the severe truths that one has so often heard against courtiers and their masters. As Dr. Beattie's merit is not unknown

known to ——, it will be to the last degree disgraceful and scandalous if it is not properly regarded.

Did you learn any thing particular of dear, excellent, unhappy, Lady Frances, before you left town. By a letter just now received from Mrs. Talbot, I find the answer at the door is the same as it has been for so many sad weeks. I fear she is for ever lost, for all the purposes of this world to herself, and to her friends, and to society, in which she acted so noble a part. Yet it is a blessing to all who so intimately knew her, to have so long been connected with a character of so much virtue; and the memory of her example, it is to be hoped, may remain long after all her power of exertion is ceased.

" Oh what a noble mind is there overthrown."

Mrs. Underdown, I thank God, continues in very calm spirits, her piety and resignation are quite exemplary, and contribute much towards those feelings of thankfulness which she expresses for the blessings still left her; her health mends slowly, but I hope will get much better when she gets into the air, and uses exercise, which she has promised to do next week. The loss of Mrs. Primrose has been a most heavy stroke to her. I

devote

devote much of my time to her, as it seems to afford her comfort.

Indeed, I have not been sufficiently settled to get into any regular course of reading. At odd times I have read two or three volumes of Dr. Hawkesworth's edition of Swift's works. I have been much pleased with the Doctor's Notes, which I never saw before. Some of them convey an excellent moral lesson, and others give a fair and candid interpretation of the design of his author, for which I felt much obliged to him. Indeed, I have always considered Swift as a character of more real worth, than most of the cotemporary writers with whom he corresponded. The extravagance of his wit, and the strange improprieties into which it too often hurried him, seem to have been absolute distemper; and the concluding years of his life, which in any other view, form so deplorable a part of the history of such a genius, appear in a comfortable light, when they are considered as merely being proofs that his aberrations from decency, and his neglect of, or want of attention to religion, did not proceed from a corrupted heart, or from scepticism; but from physical infirmity, which at last ended in complete imbecility of mind *.

Your

* This is the best, and perhaps the only apology that can be made both for Swift's writings, and for many parts of his conduct.

Your dismissal of your good Doctor made me smile; I am glad you have dismissed him at least in the capacity of a Doctor, for I think as a companion, you would have him set down in your *paper*. It is grievous to see how his liberal and expanded mind is stiffened and shrivelled by the Quaker forms. If ever he stays long enough in a place, which but seldom happens, to enter into conversation, he becomes warm and animated; his soul bursts the shell, in which it had been cramped and folded, and springs forth all alive, and glittering with vivid colouring. Indeed, he is, I believe, a man of uncommon talents, great knowledge of the world, very sincere piety, and a most benevolent heart *.

Indeed, my dear friend, I cannot tolerate your apologies about franks. If there ever was a time when I might have felt the postage of a letter, your kindness and generosity have certainly made that, and many other points quite easy to me. I do not squander my money in blonds and

conduct. He is generally considered only as a poet and a politician; but it is painful to reflect that he was also a clergyman.

* The physician alluded to was Dr. Fothergill, and whoever remembers that excellent and amiable man, will not be likely to disagree with Mrs. Carter in her view of his character.

gauzes,

gauzes, and I thank God, and the goodness of my friends, I have sufficient for indulging myself in every such real comfort as I receive from the assurance of their being well, and continuing me in their remembrance.—Adieu, &c.

LETTER CLIX.

Deal, *June* 19, 1773.

By this time, my dear friend, I hope your looks begin to sympathize with your constitution, and have lost all impressions of the smoke; and I heartily rejoice to hear that you are quite free from feverishness, for while that remained, the fragrance of roses, and the music of the woods, would be capable of affording very little more pleasure, than the smell of stale mackarel, or the screaming of brick dust and small coals. I am sorry to find that when you have evidently been so much mended by change of air, you are obliged to return to town. If you are there now, the fine shower of last night must have a little cooled the air for you, otherwise I think London will be too warm for you. In our open coast, fanned by the sea breeze, the weather

ther is very delightful, and the frequent gentle showers preserves the fields in the brightest verdure. There is, thank God, a very happy prospect of plenty, if human folly or wickedness does not frustrate the bounties of heaven. It is very certain, that at this time there is not any scarcity either of animals, or of grass, and yet the price of meat is most scandalously kept up.

I am glad Mrs. Cutts is with Mrs. Scott; she is, I think, very ingenious, and a remarkable good woman, and I should have thought it no fault of her's that broke up the trio at Hitcham; but she is very well taken care of by her brother; and Mrs. Scott is always delighted to see her in the summer. Mrs. Douglas is going to pay a visit to my brother in Berkshire, and as it is so near, I hope she will go to the Commemoration at Oxford. But what is the Commemoration at Oxford, to the great doings next week at Portsmouth.

I cannot help thinking, but that good part of the hurry of your London life might be avoided, if you had a villa at a small distance. And of what use is all the prosperity of your coal mines, if it cannot purchase you a medicine, for in this light I consider it.

I do not enter into the reasonableness of Mrs. W——'s displeasure, on the occasion you mention; but you may remember, that when we talked

talked on this subject, I took the liberty of telling you, that I thought she herself was the person to whom it would be proper for you to apply; and indeed I was pretty sure she would not take it well, if an application was made to any one else. With regard to her affliction, from all that I have learned, it appears to be very deep and sincere. I am sure I dissent from you in this point from a mere principle of justice; for I never had the least connection with her whatever, even of the most common acquaintance.

I have not seen Dr. Hawkesworth's book. It has received much abuse from the newspapers; but that would not prejudice me against it. Such an objection as you make is indeed of very real importance, and I am sorry to find he has departed in any instance from the tendency of his former writings *.

I suppose our dear Sylph is by this time ready to embark for Ireland; I have not heard from

* This probably relates to the Doctor's narrative of Captain Cook's Voyage, in which he was supposed to deny, or at least to discountenance the delightful and consoling idea of a particular overruling and disposing Providence. He was much hurt by this imputation; and there seems reason to believe that he was not aware of the tendency of what he so carelessly and injudiciously wrote, and of the ill use to which it might be applied.

her since I left London. Lady Dartrey wrote me a note just as they landed, to let me know they were safe and well, which was like her usual kindness. I hope something will be done by the ministry, in a fair reasonable manner, to satisfy the Irish. It is terrible to think of the consequences of a breach to both kingdoms in general, and to one's friends in particular. Your illness was quite a dragon to our Sylph. However, she was very kind in giving me a true state of the case, without any tincture from her fears.

I will tell you a little anecdote of the Emperor, which perhaps you may not have heard, and it is from good authority. When he was at a certain court, his Imperial Majesty entered into conversation with a statesman grown grey in the science of politics. The old man naturally supposed he would have talked to him in his own way; but the Emperor chose to discourse only on war and religion, two subjects of which the politician, in relating this story, said he understood very little, but could just discover from the conversation, that the Emperor in war was a corporal; and in religion a capuchin *.

As

* The Emperor Joseph the Second; a man who appears to have begun his political life with the best intentions, and with the most earnest desire of encreasing the happiness of mankind.

As you talked of being in London on Wednesday, I direct this to Hill-street, from whence pray give me just one line to say you are well and safe.

LETTER CLX.

July 20, 1773.

I REALLY rejoice, my dear friend, in the health and spirits with which you appear to enjoy your return to Sandleford. The day on which you proposed to walk over your territories, was a delightful one, and must have set every improvement in the fairest point of view. The expedition in itself must have been very pleasant. The heart feels one of its most innocent pleasures, and best transports in the view of every proper improvement of the bounties of heaven.

mankind. But as this anecdote shews, he thought he knew every thing, while in reality he was very ignorant, especially of the nature of man as a moral agent. Hence he knew not how to govern, or rather how to lead him; and therefore became, as he owned himself with a bitter sigh, "unfortunate in all his enterprizes."

May

May you long enjoy all those which the divine goodness has in such profusion, and in so many varieties assigned you, and in a manner that will impress on them the seal of eternity.

The fine shows of this world have no long continuance, and must give place to one another. The Portsmouth expedition has been swallowed up in the great doings at Oxford. Mrs. Douglas was there, and most highly entertained. Did you ever see a more wicked article, than the one in the newspapers, dated from Oxford, giving an account that the roof of the theatre had fallen in, and that four thousand people were buried under the ruins? From some circumstances at the end of the letter there was reason to think it an invention; but this was not sufficient to remove the shock which one had felt from the beginning, but still there was no certainty; and reason is not always an irresistible check to the feelings of the heart; and any person, who, in all probability, had a brother and sister, and a family of friends in the place, could not be very easy in a report not impossible to be true. The next post, God be thanked, proved it to be a lie, but my nerves had been terribly hurt in the mean time. How is it possible any human mind can delight itself in such wanton mischief! To invent a lie, from which no advantage can arise, but from the suf-

ferings

ferings of others, by whom the authors have never been offended, has something in it that would seem quite infernal, if it could not be resolved into one of the most pernicious of human evils, vanity *.

" All human race would fain be wits,"

and from the idea, that there was something very witty and ingenious in this composition, I suppose the writer was induced to publish it, at the small hazard of giving pain to the hearts of half a nation. I hope the account did not reach Mrs. Dunbar, in Ireland. Both the writer of that letter, and the publisher, surely deserve a more severe punishment than many that are inflicted by the law, on faults which do not bring half so much misery on society. I hear Lady Edgcumbe was ill at Oxford, but not dangerously. It seemed a great undertaking for any constitution, not made of iron and steel, to go through

* The observation, no doubt, is just; and this, which is generally supposed to be a trifling passion, unworthy of serious and religious remark, is the occasion of more evil than many other more obviously dangerous perversions of the human mind. In Scriptural language vanity refers to those who are not guided by religious obligation; but the *all is vanity* of the royal preacher, relates only to the state of human life, and not to the passions of the human breast.

the

the hurry of the review at Portsmouth, and then to attempt the Commemoration.

I had a letter from our dear Sylph, dated from the isle of Anglesea, last week. Long before this I hope she is happily landed on the further shore, from whence she will cast many a longing look towards those whom she has left behind. Lady Dartrey's sweet little boy is ordered by Mr. Hawkins to bathe in the sea, and I expect to see him at Deal. He is not ill, but wants strength, and her Ladyship leaves Ireland the sooner on this account, so that I expect to see her soon after his arrival. I have known Dr. Hawkesworth many years, and honoured him as the author of the Adventurers, which are an excellent set of papers. I am very sorry to find that this last performance is so unworthy of him. I have not seen it, and certainly never shall have the least curiosity to read it from the accounts that you, and some of my other friends, have given me of it. I hope to hear soon that quiet and fresh air have had the desired effect, and that you are, my dear friend, quite well.

LETTER CLXI.

August 14, 1773.

I HEARTILY rejoice, my dear friend, to find you have dismissed your fever, and I hope the quiet of Sandleford will prevent its return. It is indeed vexatious that such hours as your's, should be consumed amidst the trifling occupations of a water-drinking place; yet if want of health prevents their proper employment, they had better be spent in trifling than in pain and languor, especially where it may be hoped that a few weeks, thus sacrificed, may enable you the better to perform with spirit and ease your duties for the rest of the year. I am glad you do not go into the North this year.

I am very sorry to hear of poor Dr. Beattie's uncomfortable suspense. These cruel delays and doubts will fall the more heavily on his spirits, as probably his studious retirement must have rendered him unacquainted with the character of courtiers, and he could receive no information from the rectitude and simplicity of his own mind.

You ask me if I have read Banks' and Solander's voyages? I have not, and I believe I never shall. Mrs. Howe was so good as to propose sending me the book to Deal, but I have declined it. The account which you gave me, of the very wrong tendency of the preface, (and the same account I have since received from others) and the scandalous indecency of some parts of the book, have raised my indignation, and entirely prevented my feeling any curiosity about it. It gives one pleasure to find that this nation has still virtue enough left to be shocked and disgusted by an attack upon religion, and an outrage against decency, such as Dr. Hawkesworth's last performance, which I find is most universally disliked. My own opinion of the book is not derived from the criticisms in the newspapers, which I scarcely ever read, but from other accounts, some of them from people not remarkably strict, nor likely to be much scandalized, unless the faults had been very striking. I am told there are many literary inaccuracies; but these are trifles compared with moral offences; though even these, from a proper regard to the public, perhaps ought to have been avoided.

You would have laughed, my dear friend, if you could have seen the astonishment and perplexity into which I was thrown, by the introduc-

tion of your letter, not being able to form the least idea why I was to be dignified by the title of Doctor. A few lines brought me to a solution of my difficulties. Though I felt very little elevation from my appointment to the cap and gown, both my vanity and my heart were very agreeably flattered by my companion, and still more by the affectionate manner in which you express yourself about it. I must feel pleased at finding myself united with you, even in a couplet of Tunbridge poetry, or a University degree. But—"*Non est mortale quod opto.*" I have infinite ambition in my views both for you and myself, which soars beyond all the sublunary honors, and looks forward to the "prize of that high calling," which leads our hopes to the starry wreaths of immortality. May heaven unite us in this supreme attainment!

I beg you will not neglect to take the millepedes, it is a most excellent medicine for the obstruction you mention in your glands, and besides may be of great use to your eyes. However, if they should grow ever so strong, yet as they must always be short-sighted, I hope you will never attempt to ride a single horse, but condescend to get behind some good stayed, sober, dull man, on a dull horse, with a strong leathern belt round his coat, on which you may take good

sure

sure hold, and ride much more safely, than by mounting a Pegasus of your own guiding.

My little friend Thomasino arrived here on Friday in good health and spirits, and is, I thank God, a comfortable child as one can wish for his delicate frame. I hope the sea will contribute to render him a little more robust. I expect Lady Dartrey next week, though I have begged her not to hurry herself, as the child is quite well. Lord and Lady Dartrey most truly deserve what you say of them, for they are most eminently good. I can never reflect with too great thankfulness on the happiness of being intimately connected with so many characters who are an ornament to human nature, and do honor to those divine principles by which they are guided. I scarcely ever receive a letter from any of my friends, in which I do not find some sentiment of their own, or some description of others, that gladdens, and I hope tends to improve my heart *. From the great and general view of public transactions, and alas! of public corruptions, how comfortable is it to retire to the walks of private vir-

* If these letters fail to produce the effect, here so beautifully described, on the hearts of those who may read them, the Editor will be deeply mortified. He will have to regret time, which he can ill spare, mis-spent; labor thrown away, and hope disappointed.

tue;

tue; to actions and sentiments which no history will celebrate, but which are registered in the records of eternity!

August 20.

A most violent fit of the head-ach prevented my finishing this letter, and now I have to thank you for one last night received. I rejoice to hear you are better. Lord and Lady Dartrey are arrived; her Ladyship, I thank God, quite well, but they were a good deal discomfited by a terrible cold howling north-east wind, which has a most dismal effect upon this place; and it was vexatious to think of their having such an *accueil* from this rough son of Eolus, at their first arrival, after such a succession of beautiful weather as we have had, and which has given all our prospects their highest beauty. The two last days have been quite doleful with wind and rain. The sun revisits us to-day, but does not seem in perfect good humour. My friends had the comfort of finding the dear boy quite well.

I heartily congratulate you, Dr. and Mrs. Beattie, on the very agreeable conclusion of his suspense, and I rejoice that the King's favor is circumstanced in a manner so advantageous and comfortable to him. I beg you will be so good as to assure the Doctor how very sincerely I participate

ticipate in his success. I imagine you have heard of an unexpected advantage to another worthy good man; that Lord Exeter has given the valuable living of St. Clement's to Mr. Burrows, with whom he had not the least acquaintance. I am persuaded he will faithfully and conscientiously discharge the important task of a most diligent instructor of so large a parish.

Are you not pleased with the match between Lord Cranbourn and Lady Mary Hill? They have both such remarkable good characters, as afford a well grounded hope of happiness. Lord Salisbury has, I understand, informed his son that he will be generous in the settlements. Poor man, he lives in a strange uncomfortable way himself; but it is very meritorious in him to contribute all he can to the happiness of others.

Mrs. Underdown's best thanks are your's, for your kind enquiries. She has at present too good a proof of her mortal existence by an attack of the gout: it is however slight, and I hope will do her good. Mrs. Chalié is with her, which s a great pleasure to her. Adieu, my dear friend. I am very much better, and hope to hear you are quite recovered.

LETTER CLXII.

Deal, *September* 13, 1773.

Your letter, my dear friend, which I received last night, was a very kind relief to the anxiety which I had felt, from the apprehension of the effect, which the loss of so excellent a friend might have on your health. I hope in God as it has stood the first shock, it will not now be in so much danger of suffering. Your account of the departure of this good man, though very affecting, is full of hope and comfort. It was a blessing to all around him, that he was permitted to preserve his senses and serenity to the last, and to give so edifying an example what a light and glory, Christian principles are capable of diffusing on the last dark scenes of a life spent in the exercise of Christian virtues. Few human souls I believe, were ever more naturally disposed to those virtues than his. His mind was fair and candid to the highest degree, and amidst all the intricacies of this perplexed world, his heart preserved its native simplicity, and was as free from guile as that of a little infant. His gentle and kind affections were tried by severe disap-

disappointments in their nearest objects; but now the combat is over; it must always afford the most delightful contemplation to his friends, to reflect with what unrepining resignation he submitted to the utter ruin of all his dearest human hopes; but he is now, I trust, rejoicing in the reward of that goodness, for which he was so ill repaid by the world *. I think his wretched unhappy son is somewhere abroad. I believe it is a foolish feeling, but I cannot yet bring myself to give the name and title of such a father to such a son. The friends of his wife, I am told, express the utmost concern for her upon this event, which one can easily believe. Poor woman, she will now too probably be left exposed to all the miserable consequences of her imprudent choice. She had every human security under the protection of such a father-in-law; but it may too justly be questioned, how far mere parchment settlements will be a defence against the wickedness of such a husband.

I am glad you have so many of your friends about you, which particularly at present may be much better for you, than having so many hours to yourself. If they leave you soon, I hope you will make some little excursion.

* George, Lord Lyttelton, died August 22, 1773.

You

You will hear from Tunstal as soon as the wheat is gone. Dr. Pennington sent a skilful person to Feversham to transact this business, but this did not satisfy Montagu, who declared he would overlook the affair himself, and accordingly took his horse, and rode along with the purchaser. My brother Carter desires me to say that he will send you some wheat from Word, a place about five miles from hence, where the wheat is thought so remarkably good for seed, that it is sent from thence to all parts of England: he is proud of your commission, and will ship it for Billingsgate as soon as he knows the quantity you want: it will not be ready to send till Michaelmas.

Pray do, my dear friend, convince yourself once for all, of no very perplexing truth, that I love you better than I do half a dozen pieces of copper. To save these at the bottom of my pocket, your letter was five days before it reached me, for I had it not till last night, after the above was written: the post-mark showed that it come regular to this place, so the delay must have been in town. But to shew you that I have as great tenderness for your silver, as you had for my copper, I kept my letter that I might make one answer do for two of your's.

Amidst your numerous avocations just now, I

am not so unreasonable as to expect you to write to me so regularly as you usually do. But I was particularly anxious to hear from you at this time, as I feared your health might have suffered from the situation of your mind, and I should have avoided three days' anxiety, if you had been less attentive to that miserable three-pence. I particularly long for good weather just at present, as I think going into the air will do you so much good, and be of so much use to your spirits. It is impossible for human affections not to feel very deeply the loss of such a friend as the excellent Lord Lyttelton, though it is accompanied with the sweet consolation, that virtues so long and so severely tried in this world, are removed to a certain reward in a better. His conduct to his daughter-in-law is truly kind; but eight hundred a-year instead of five: this addition to her income, poor woman! is purchased at a dear rate, by the inexpressible loss she must too probably feel of so kind and powerful a protector.

The newspapers which reach us here, have made no attack upon King Solomon, but content themselves with abusing King George, to which no doubt they think they have a very good right, as every Englishman thinks his own King a lawful prize. I wrote to condole with our dear Sylph, as soon as I thought she could hear of

good

good Lord Lyttelton's death, which news, I well knew, would be most afflicting to her.

Adieu, my dearest friend, do not write to me but when it is perfectly convenient to you, but let me again intreat that the consideration of postage may never be the cause of delay, as a letter from you is always a comfort of the first magnitude to

Yours, &c.

LETTER CLXIII.

Deal, *September* 20, 1773.

As I have always endeavoured, my dear friend, to keep my imagination and my common sense in separate apartments, that they may not usurp each other's rights, my social feelings have been no less exercised than my poetical melancholy by the state of the weather. This equinoctial bustle is indeed very unfavourable for invalids.

Your account of your dear nephew's accident quite made me shudder. What a providential escape, that the sweet boy did not lose his eye. The philosophical Dr. Hawkesworth, if what I have

have heard of his system is fairly represented, would gravely argue, that if Providence had any thing to do with it, the penknife had never come near the eye; but (not to mention any thing else) the Doctor seems not to consider, what a beneficial alarm such visible and striking interpositions of Providence are intended to give to human carelessness, which is so apt to overlook its more secret and regular exertions for our constant preservation *.

Lady Dartrey went to Bristol, I thank God, by way of prevention, more than from necessity, for I never saw her better than while here. My little friend Thomasino is delightfully improved since he has been here. He is all day long breathing the fresh sea air, which here is as pure as possible, and for such a fairy, is grown quite hardy and robust, and full of spirits. I believe this animated scene is particularly good for him. I found him this morning with his hands almost up to his elbows in a large dish of live shrimps.

* It must be obvious to every well-regulated and thinking mind, that if Providence permitted no casualties or misfortunes to occur, all thoughts of the superintending care of God would soon be lost in the world. But while for some few that suffer many escape, we are continually reminded of that paternal care and protection of the Almighty, which is justly called by the name of Providence.

We have been very illustrious this summer at Deal. Lord and Lady Willoughby have taken lodgings for two months. All my friends are gone but Lady Arveram, who, I believe, will stay some time longer at Deal Castle. Lord and Lady Spencer and Lady Clermont have been waiting at Calais some time for a wind. It is to be hoped they are not now on the sea. The poor ships are miserably tossed in view of my window, though I hope there is no danger, as their anchors seem to hold fast. The wind is so high, that I am shaken in my chair as if I was in a cabin.

It is not long since I heard from our dear Sylph. Her spirits, poor soul, seem to be very low. It would, I am sure, be a great comfort to her to hear from you; but probably you have already written. Never was there a more amiable heart than belongs to this dear friend of our's; but she wants to have her attention awakened to some subjects from which the hurry of the world too much withdraws her thoughts. No one can do this either with greater power, or aided by stronger affection to give peculiar weight to every argument than you; and in the present turn of her mind, every thing that a particularly affecting subject might naturally suggest, might be peculiarly useful. But do not let me propose

any

any task which will be too painful for you; only keep this general hint in your mind, and improve it to her good, when you have an opportunity, and can do it with ease.

The post which occasioned you such kind inquietudes about me, my dear friend, at the same time strangely perplexed me, as Miss More informed me that I owed you a letter. Now as among the many debts which I owe you, and which I shall never be able to pay but by acknowledging them, I was conscious a letter was not one, I could not tell how to account for this charge, till your account of the delay, just received, solved the difficulty.

It is not more wonderful, I think, that Catherine of Russia should not be able to sign her own name, than that Charlemagne could neither read nor write. One can more easily conceive it practicable for a stout gentlewoman, brought up in a camp, to put a ring in the noses of a nation of bears, without any assistance from the Muses, than that an author, like Charlemagne, should not be able to write his own compositions. I have got into the third volume of Captain Cook, and have got beyond the melancholy account of his unfortunate death. The continuation of the journal by Captain King is in a much more elegant style, and the descriptions are much more picturesque

picturesque than the former part. What future benefit may arise to the poor inhabitants of these newly-discovered countries, from the communication which we have opened with them, will be determined by time; at present, alas! they seem to have little reason to think themselves the better for our intercourse with them.

Miss More tells me that Mr. Montagu wishes to be informed of some valuable German books. My own stock is very small. I have always heard Gellert's works mentioned with high approbation. Gesner's death of Abel, and his Idylls, are charming poems in measured prose, and not at all difficult. Usong, written on the plan of the Cyropœdia, Telemaque, &c. is worth reading. Haller is a good poet. He writes in rhyme, and is rather less easy than those I have mentioned. I believe you have read Sophia Sternheim in a French translation, and I think approved it. These are all I can recollect at present.

If your amiable guests are still with you, they will have, I hope, fine weather for their excursions, notwithstanding we have had it so boisterous. Our prospects of plenty in this neighbourhood are very great, although we had so long a winter, and such an unsummerlike summer. I never remember seeing the corn look finer. My

friends

friends at Eastrey are gone to Tunstal for the harvest. If it please God the weather is fine, they will, I hope, be back before the aguish season. For this, and many other reasons, I long to have them within a walk. Whether it be little or much that is deposited in your barns, the harvest must always be favorable to you, while you make it a means of dispensing the blessings of heaven to the helpless, and to the industrious poor. Adieu, my dear friend. God bless and prosper you. I am ever, &c.

LETTER CLXIV.

Deal, *October* 19, 1773.

My dear Friend,

My brother desires me to acquaint you, that the four quarters of wheat which you ordered, were to be shipped on Friday last on board a Sandwich hoy: he has written to Mr. King to let him know of its coming. I hope it will answer your purpose, and yield you a good increase.

I had written so far without having the heart to proceed, from the excessive uneasiness I was under, at not having heard from you so much longer

longer than usual. And yet I have such an aversion to teazing my friends to write, when perhaps it may be inconvenient to them, and it might seem so foolish and so unreasonable to be alarmed at a silence, which, however long it might appear to me, I knew by computation not to be really so, that I resisted the temptation of writing. Your letter last night proved there had been too much reason for my anxiety. But thank God you are better. I long for the time when we shall meet in town, for I am miserable at hearing of such frequent attacks, and you at such a distance.

I should not think Edinburgh a good place for our friend to send his grandson to, for by all accounts the articles of expence there are now got to an extravagant pitch, and the licentiousness and dissipation are answerable to the principles which are become so fashionable there. All this is very natural. Infidelity is perhaps most commonly formed into a system by the metaphysical vices; but its effect amongst the multitude will always be dissolute and profligate morals. When the passions are emancipated from their obedience to the authoritative voice of God, it is very easy for them to bring over reason to speak any language which is dictated by themselves. You seem to have a confidence in your nephew's tutor, on which I congratulate you,

for

for much will certainly depend on his character, and degree of attention.

It gives me pleasure to find you had anticipated my intimation with regard to our dear and amiable friend. Indeed she is formed for enjoyments much superior to that *foolish* world, which too much engages her mind, and leads it on by the dancing phantom of an *ignus fatuus* of pleasure, which she wearies her spirits in pursuing, and which she never is able to overtake. This makes her so restless and uneasy in the possession of what she really likes *best*, while she fancies it detains her from something she likes better. Her wishes are perpetually stretching after perfection, but unfortunately mistakes the road. What a repose would it give to her excellent heart, if she could learn to content herself with such moderate degrees of enjoyment, as are allotted for us in this world, and fix her hopes on the completion of that happiness, for which we are formed in a better! Our best pleasures even in this life, are not only heightened and returned, but doubly endeared to us by their connection with the expectation of another.

I hope Dr. and Mrs. Beattie have got to the end of their long journey, before this deluging weather. Did the Doctor give any hopes of the completion of his charming poem? I have just

been reading something very unlike it, which, in spite of all the magic of Italian sounds, I could scarcely get through. What a strange inequality of genius, that the author of the Gerusalemme, could likewise be the author of that wretched poor thing the Aminta! I had not read it a good while, but remembered I did not like it, and I find my present taste exactly like the past.

I remember when Doctor Smith was chosen at Oxford, he had a competitor, I forget his name, so much of his own principles, that the people who had the interest of Christianity at heart, were greatly perplexed for which of the two to give their vote. Is it not very shocking there should have been no other choice? I have just gone through your friend Mr. West's book, on the Resurrection, which I do not recollect ever having seen before. It is one of the best written and most delightful books I ever read. I have been attempting Dr. Shuckford's Connection, in which there is to be sure a great deal of very profound learning, so profound that I sunk in the middle of the second volume, and I believe shall never wade through to the end *. So I have even

* Mrs. Carter's opinion of this work seems to have been given more hastily than she generally allowed herself to do. The

even scrambled out as well as I could, and am now engaged with Stillingfleet's Origines Sacræ. Here too I find a great deal of learning; but it is learning arranged by judgment, and illuminated by good sense. It is an excellent performance, did you ever see it? If not, you will I believe find it well worth your time.

Do you read any of the stuff with which the newspapers have for some time been filled with, about Shakespear, and his commentators, and his editors? I have looked no further either into the verse or prose, than to see whether you were mentioned, and to my great satisfaction have found, that the authors of this jumble of nonsense, have had decency enough not to name you, either in satire or panegyric.

I have delivered your message to my brother, but he has not yet been able to pay for the wheat, as the price here is not fixed. I rejoice that you find the earth so well answer to her title of *Justissima*. He who is the Lord of earth and heaven, by the *general* laws of his Providence rewards with success every industrious improvement of his gifts; and his *particular* protection is equally secured to those who diffuse the blessing as widely,

The style of it is certainly dull and prolix, but, to a biblical student, it is a very useful book, and contains not only much learning, but a great deal of sound argument.

and as beneficially as possible to others. Have you read Doctor Hawkesworth's second edition, I am told he has endeavoured to answer the exceptionable passage in the preface to the first; but that he has not done it in a satisfactory manner. I have not seen either the one or the other.

I am so happy as to hear from very certain authority, that dear good Lady Coningsby is considerably better. God grant that the amendment may continue, and that she may be restored to us. The weather has been outrageous, and autumn has usurped the rights of winter. The sweet days last week, gave one hopes of more temperate weather; but last night and this morning have brought back wind and rain, and for a little variety in the tempest we had a good deal of lightning. Adieu, my dear friend, as the Parliament meets so early, I hope it will bring some of your particular friends to cheer your fire-side. So wishes yours, &c.

LETTER CLXV.

Deal, *October* 30, 1773.

THE chilling blasts of autumnal mornings and evenings will surely, my dear friend, sufficiently secure you against a northern expedition, and Mr. Montagu will find himself more disposed to enjoy himself *aucoin de son feu*, than to take a journey, unless like the swallows he could take his flight towards the south.

I so far agree with you in the opinion of the wisdom and magnanimity of the Venetians with regard to the wicked league of Cambray, that I am very willing to believe that wretched abject address to the Emperor Charles V. mentioned in some authors, is a scandalous forgery *. Giustiniani's History, only describes the Incunabula of the Venetian State; for he brings his account no lower than about the year 800.—Your Tale of the present Times is admirable, and ought to go down to posterity.

* Probably this was not the case. The Venetians felt a truth which they were unwilling to confess, that their power was tottering to its base. In fact they were from that moment only "*magni nominis umbra*;" and never were afterwards of any real weight in the scale of Europe.

I am

I am of your opinion in general with regard to giving directions to candidates, and, I believe, I exprest myself cautiously when I seemed to differ. The truth is, I think, there may be seasons in which such stipulations are necessary. When King James II. for instance, was taking every method to overset the laws and constitution of a country, of which he was appointed the guardian; had not every constituent a right, and was it not his duty to demand an explicit answer from the candidate, whether he designed to concur with such an administration of government, or to oppose it *?—I do not draw the parallel; for I am not enough *au fait* of some late proceedings to know whether they deserve the clamour which is raised against them. I have not seen the Quebec Bill, and therefore cannot tell how far the representation made of it may be true, that it established popery and slavery in any part of the British government; for I have lived long enough to know, that a picture drawn from

* Mrs. Carter rather seems here to confound two very different circumstances. It is one thing to ask a candidate whether his principles agree with your own before you vote for him; and it is another to give him directions for his public conduct afterwards. The first is strictly constitutional; but it may well be doubted whether the other may not be considered in a very opposite light.

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the colouring of party, may be far enough from a just resemblance.

There are some contrivances I hear, or rather wishes, by some means or other, to get in Lord Mahon, which I cannot help hoping may not succeed. Every wise and honest man ought to oppose despotism; but it is strange that any wise or honest man should think it a proper means of defending a constitution like this, by introducing into the House of Commons pert republican boys. —I beg your pardon. I am considering your friend only in his political capacity; and, indeed, I was highly disgusted in reading the account of his indecent attack upon Mr. Knight, then one of our county members.

When you ask for an account of my studies, alas, my dear friend, you little guess what my present situation is. My father is so ill, that my time is broken into small portions, by my attendance upon him. During the hours I set with him, I cannot apply my mind to any thing serious, and when he is in bed, I am so often listening, and have so much anxiety about him, that you will easily imagine I have little leisure or spirits for application. His present complaint is a fixed pain in his side, which deprives him both of rest and appetite; his medical attendant at present thinks there is not any danger, but at his

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age there is no answering for the consequences of such an attack.

I at times drudge a little through Puffendorf. His general scheme is certainly an admirable compendium of history, and with regard to facts, I suppose for the most part he is very exact; but his own observations and comments are usually "*des pauvretés.*" In the character of nations he is defective; and in those of individuals sometimes very unjust. He says, of a particular person, that he was "a crafty, thorough-paced, ambitious man," could one guess that such a picture was drawn for William the First, Prince of Orange? All human creatures are imperfect, and those who act on the great theatre of the world, and amidst the confusions of a disordered state, are in perpetual danger, from their own heightened passions, and from the wretched connections in which they are too often engaged, to submit to modes of action at which a delicate virtue would shudder. Yet surely the Prince of Orange was, upon the whole, great and respectable, and one of the most virtuous political characters in history. The short ejaculations in which he expired, proved his love for the country, which he recommended to the divine protection, to have been sincere. In the surprize of a sudden and violent death, there was no time for recollec-

recollection, for ostentation and parade, and he could at that time speak from nothing but the governing and habitual principles of his heart. Puffendorf is equally severe on Coligni. His conduct might, perhaps, upon the whole, be more equivocal than that of the Prince of Orange. Yet surely it was not of that class which ought to have been marked only by its faults.

I am afraid I must defer the sight of Miss Scott's Poem, till I can get to London, for I fear I have but little chance of meeting with it here. It had been mentioned to me before your letter arrived, in a very advantageous manner. Adieu, *toute à vous.*

LETTER CLXVI.

Deal, *November* 19, 1773.

My dearest friend,

Your letter, dated Wednesday, did not reach me till last night, and I was beginning to be uneasy about you; but I hope by this time you are safe by your fire-side in Hill Street, which is surely at this time the properest place for you. It is hard to say, in the course of so many years

as I have lived, which has been the most tempestuous season, or I should pronounce it to be the present. The violence of the wind and rain here for several days, and sometimes for several weeks, is beyond description. The wind drives the rain so strongly, that there is scarcely a room in this house, but what is like a cullender, with a stream of water running through it from the roof and windows, and window-shutters, there is no keeping any part of the house dry. You will easily imagine that my smaller and weaker tenement, is at least as much affected as my house of brick and mortar. Indeed, I believe, I have felt it the more, for one fine, clear, bracing day of last week, which had given me a delightful degree of elasticity; but the next, alas! slackened all the springs, and has made a poor wretch of me indeed. If this uproar of the elements is to continue till Christmas, it is to be hoped my constitution will get accustomed to it.

Mrs. Pennington wrote to you a day or two ago, they are all here at present, they came to keep my father's eighty-sixth birth-day; and great thankfulness ought we all to feel, for a continuance of so great a blessing. His understanding, I thank God, is still as lively and as strong as ever; and his health, excepting that sharp attack he had last month, which, thank God, did not

not last very long, for his age, is most wonderful. We were all out yesterday afternoon, I came home early, and found the storm so terrible, and was so nearly upset by it, that I was quite in a terror about my father, and sent two men to attend him home; but he found himself so stou and strong, that he left one behind to take care of the Penningtons', and weathered a point in getting to this house, which I could not venture to encounter, and said he was not, nor indeed did he appear to be the least fatigued with the violence of the storm. The Penningtons' staid till the wind was much abated, and even then my sister found great difficulty in reaching home. I mention this to prove how strong my dear father is for his age.

This morning I missed all the ships that were in prospect before my window, which indeed I expected. They broke from their anchors, and six of them are on shore betwixt this and Sandown Castle; but, thank God, there were no lives lost. It blows and rains to day so bad I cannot venture even to Mrs. Underdown's. The Penningtons' go to town soon after they leave us, my sister Pennington, who is sitting at my elbow reading all the novels she can get in the world, desires her best respects to you, and your godson his duty.

I believe

I believe the only reason I did not read Mr. West's book sooner was, because I had it not to read. My dear Miss Talbot often used to laugh at me, and affirm I never would read any books but my own; and, indeed, if it is a book that pleases me, I never can have any great enjoyment of it in the hurry which I always feel to return any thing I have borrowed. Mr. West is now my own property, and placed in the class of those books which I regularly read once a year. I have bound up the Trial of the Witnesses with it (which I had read before), which has all the spirit and cleverness of its author; but neither in argument or style, I think, by any means comparable to the other. I think there has been some attempt to answer it, by that wretched, conceited, unfair scribbler, Morgan *. No man in his wits, I suppose, can have undertaken to answer Mr. West, which can scarcely be done, without avowing the absurdity that no historical evidence whatever has a claim to belief. One has a very high additional pleasure in reading this noble performance, from the character which

* Probably Dr. Morgan, author of "The Moral Philo-"sopher," is the person here meant. See an account of his writings in Leland's "View of the Deistical Writers;" but no mention is made in that excellent work, of any answer by Morgan to Bishop Sherlock's "Trial of the Witnesses."

you,

you, and indeed all who knew him, give of the author, whose life carried to so high a perfection, the virtues of that religion, which his pen so admirably defended. What an influence might the talents, and the example of such a preceptor have had on the head and heart of the pupil that was proposed for him, if this nation had been worthy of such a blessing!

If Stillingfleet had been ever so well skilled in the Celtic mythology, I think it could not well have entered into his plan; as I believe the enemies of revelation never raise any forces against it from thence. I believe I asked you some time ago, why I could not read Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, which I really wish to do, as it is so generally quoted and admired, and I suppose deserves to be so; but the sense, which, when one can get at it, I believe to be extremely good, is so entangled and embarrassed by an unnecessary multitude of words, that I have not patience to go through it.

I have just finished Herodotus and Thucydides, and am carrying on the series of the History of Xenophon, and contemplating the last setting glories of the Athenian State. Indeed it always appears wonderful to me that it could have subsisted so long, where there seemed to be no regular system of government; but all was hurried

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on by the rash impluse of a giddy populace, which irreparably gave decisions in one day, for which they were often ready to hang themselves the next; and yet were never warned against the same fatal precipitation on any future occasion. Plato and Xenophon must have been deeply imprest by a sense of the miseries flowing from this wild democracy, to lead them to such a strange admiration of the Spartan government, which they seem to have considered merely in the single point of opposition to the inconveniences of their own; without reflecting that the general system was a contradiction to the natural laws of humanity.

I am sorry to hear so poor an account of Mrs. Scott, pray remember me to her. How very kind of dear good Lord Lyttelton to leave his house as it stood for six months to his daughter-in-law, that she might not be distrest by a hasty removal; kind and considerate in every thing, and how much is she to be pitied who has lost such a friend! Adieu, my dearest friend, pray be well, that my heart may be at rest about you.

Yours, &c.

LETTER CLXVII.

Deal, *December* 24, 1773.

INDEED, my dear friend, it is a very consoling postscript to the declaration of your having no *gout* for society, that you have not however barred your door. Whenever you think of coming to such a resolution, I beg to have a convenient notice of it, for I cannot at present guess how long a time it might require for me to accommodate myself with tolerable decency to such an event.

I agree with you that a different success to the affairs of Henry and Elizabeth, might have made some difference, at least for one age, in the testimonies of historians concerning the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. Yet even at that very time, the action appeared so very execrable even to some of the Papists, that when orders were issued from that Pandemonium the Court of Charles IX. to continue the same infernal tragedy through the kingdom, some of the magistrates of the provincial towns would not comply with them.

Though Constanza is not to be excused for passing over a horrible act of savage vengeance, without any mark of disapprobation, yet surely there

there seems to be a less degree of guilt in the Sicilian Vespers, than in the Massacre of Paris. The one was an act of cool villany, in violation of a solemn treaty, and of the most sacred rights of society; the other the wild fury of an exasperated people, provoked and harassed by the oppressions of foreign tyranny, rendered still more hateful as an invasion of the claims of their murdered prince. A reader of this horrid narration, who judged merely on a first view, might be apt to wonder that Charles of Anjou should have been suffered to escape a calamity in which so many less guilty persons were involved. But it was his effectual ruin in a less sudden, but more painful chastisement. He lived just long enough to feel all the shame and vexation of disappointed ambition, and left the world with the miserable uncertainty whether his own son might not suffer the same cruel treatment which he, with such a detestable mockery of justice, had inflicted on the two unfortunate young men, who had been sacrificed to his ambitious views.— O dear, O dear, why will you set me to talking over history, when there is so much danger that I may not stop till you are tired to death of the subject. I must, however, at even that risk, add a few words more on this subject, just to ask you, whether the brutality of the Sicilian character,

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in this dreadful transaction, in which fathers murdered their own daughters, because they had married Frenchmen, does not bear a strong resemblance to their ancient stamp, and remind you of their behaviour with regard to the daughter of Hiero, so many centuries before *. I have not read Constanza's History, though I have been looking out for it a long while. I know where to borrow it; but, by all accounts, it is a book worth having in one's possession.

It will not be in my power to dine with you on Monday, as you so kindly wish, that being the very day I propose to set out; and Wednesday is the soonest I can be in town. I hope to arrive early enough on that day to wait on you, either to dinner or tea, whichever you like best. Adieu, my dearest friend, God grant the new year may bring you more comfortable health, and every other blessing; this is praying not only for you, but for

Your truly affectionate.

* Alluding to an affecting circumstance related by Livy, of the murder of Heraclea, daughter of Hiero the Second, King of Syracuse, together with her two daughters, in a popular insurrection; although no fault was alleged against them, and they pleaded eloquently for their lives at the altars of their *Di Penates*, where they had fled for refuge.

LETTER CLXVIII.

Deal, *June* 21, 1774.

My dearest Friend,

I LONG to know how you do, but I most earnestly beg you will write not a word more at a time to me, while you are at Tunbridge, than is sufficient to assure me you are well. I can profit by your thoughts, when I am so happy to be near you, and when the communication will do you no harm, and *en attendant,* I can content myself with the wisdom of other times. So pray bestow on the people with whom you converse *de vive voix* all the sense of your head; while I am absent from you, I shall be perfectly well satisfied with preserving a share of your heart.

I hope Tunbridge will give you health and spirit sufficient to carry you through all the fatigues and *contretems* of your journey to the North, with still enough left to rejoice the heart of your friends in the winter. I congratulate you that your quiet continues. I cannot say mine is begun; for by one means or other, I have been in a constant hurry ever since I came home. I hoped to have kept clear of the strangers who visit

visit the sea in this place; but last night brought me a request from one of my friends to be acquainted with an acquaintance of her's, and *bon gré malgré*, it must be done; as I do not think it quite a sufficient reason for refusing a thing merely because it happens to contradict my inclinations. In consequence of all this, my old friends of Greece and Rome, for any thing they have yet been to me, might as well have been delivered up to the secular arm of Dr. Bryant. Miss Yardley comes to us on Wednesday; I hope she will help to raise my father's spirits, which are very low indeed; but I fear she will hardly stay long enough. My compliments to Lady Sophia Egerton; I am sorry you can give no better account of her health; but, indeed, I fear it is a very hopeless case.

The company at the *fête champêtre* *, were exceedingly amused by their entertainment, which was very fine. But there was a strange kind of exhibition, in compliment to Lady B—— H——, which I find was thought absurd and indelicate; so poor Lord Stanley, with all his cost and trouble, has proved, like many others,

* Given on the occasion of the marriage of Lord Stanley, now Earl of Derby, to Lady Elizabeth Hamilton, at the Oaks, Surrey.

"*dedecorum pretiosus emptor.*" I hear, however, that he denies having any share himself in the contrivance of the druid and the epithalamium. Did you hear that old Lord Derby has lived long enough out of the world, to compute the charge of this same *fête champêtre* at fifty or sixty pounds? One would think the poor man must have shut himself up in some hole, absolutely out of the reach of all human commerce.

I honor your condescension in submitting to a pillion, which for some hours in the day degrades you from a fine lady, to the appearance of a mere reputable gentlewoman. I will deliver your message to Dr. and Mrs. Pennington, when they return from Oxford, where they are gone to fetch their son for the vacation. I thank God, he has an exceeding good character from his tutor; and it is a comfortable symptom, he is always glad to come home, where he is kept as close to his studies by his father, as if he was at College. The tutor does not very well like his being so little there, as he thinks it implies a distrust of the moral discipline of the University, and indeed I am very sorry to say, there is by far too great a foundation for such a suspicion*; and the

* The great improvement which has, within these few years, taken place at Oxford, both with respect to moral disciplin*

the Doctor is very right to have his son under his own eye, as much as possible.

I agree with you in wishing the rumour which you heard at Hayes, may prove true. But what a marvellous point, so far as I am able to comprehend it, is the ministry driving at, with regard to Quebec, by endeavouring to introduce a French government into any part of the British empire!

What a scandalous insult, even upon common decency, is it for a person of such a profession, and in such a situation in that profession, to send such a lesson to his son! Do pray, my dear friend, as soon as possible, set about your comment on that profligate work*. Consider of what very important service your talents may be to the cause of religion and virtue, and consider the right which He to whom you owe those talents, has to such a service. I think you can-

discipline, and the examination for degrees, is such as must give delight to every one who is attached to his *Alma Mater*, or who, being unconnected with that celebrated University, feels an interest in the learning, religion, and virtue of the rising generation.

* Lord Chesterfield's Letters were published in this year, and seem to be the work alluded to; yet the word *profession* is hardly applicable to Lord Chesterfield's situation. It is much to be lamented that Mrs. Montagu wanted either time or inclination to apply her wit and genius to counteract the mischief which these volumes have done.

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not have a fairer opportunity of conveying instruction to the world, than by exposing the execrable and wretched doctrines of this vile anti-moral composition to the infamy and contempt which it so highly deserves. Pray think very seriously on this subject, and whenever your health will allow it, set about counteracting the poison. Do not suffer idle heads or corrupt hearts to avail themselves of any specious expressions, but prove, as you most easily may, that all that sing-song about virtue, and truth, and probity, is "*vox et præterea nihil*," and that virtue, and truth, and probity, are impracticable things on such principles.

I have almost finished settling my goods and chattels; and this evening I am going to make tea for a party of fifteen, which, as I am tired, I would rather not have had; but they will play quadrille, and amuse my father, and that will amply pay for all the fatigue. Adieu, ever yours.

LETTER CLXIX.

Deal, *June* 28, 1774.

You are certainly in the right, my dear friend, that no prince but the Prince of Darkness, will be a gainer by the wars with which the monarchs of the earth alarm and ravage a world in which the Divine goodness has provided enough for all, if each would be contented with a brother's share. I am as angry with their most Mahometan, and schismatic majesties, as you can be; nor should I much fear them, if we were clear of all American schemes. Though our offences are very great, we are still a nation where the oracles of Divine truths are permitted to speak for themselves without restriction; where the courts of justice are uncorrupted, and the uninterrupted course of equal laws, affords the same protection to the peer and the cottager. An adherence, amidst all our vices and follies, to these fundamental principles of national virtue and happiness, is, I trust, a proof that we are not a totally profligate and abandoned people; and though there is much too great a mixture of wickedness among the individuals of government, our

our public faith is, I trust, much purer than that of our enemies, and we are, in this respect, more "sinned against, than sinning." At all events, the recollection of the many deliverances which this nation has experienced, when powerful fleets and armies, and rebellions and invasions threatened to swallow us up, may, without presumption, give all who confide in the same gracious Power, who has so often saved us, a hope that will prevent us sinking into that despondency, which gives up every thing for lost.

I have read the Poem, and acknowledge the justice of many of your criticisms, though I cannot help differing from you in some respects. I most perfectly agree with you as to the subject, which always appeared to me so foolish, that I could never read any thing about it till this Poem; which probably pleased me the better, from the surprize of finding it treated in a manner of which I thought it incapable.

Juno, I think, does not appear in an improper character. When she tempted Paris with empire, it was fit she should suggest the means of acquiring it; and though she is usually represented as fighting only with her tongue, I believe you will find her clawing very notably in some classical authors. The Doctor has made the same contradiction in the description of Oblivion,

as

as I mentioned to you about Indolence in another piece—and yet it is not quite the same kind. Oblivion does not beckon the whirlwinds of devastation, but they beckon Oblivion, which is the consequence of their destruction.

I am utterly at a loss how to determine about the fate of this Poem; but as you think there are so many objections to it, I should rather be of opinion that it would be better omitted, rather than hazard the author's reputation in a doubtful piece, when there are so many others that must establish his fame as one of the best poets in our language. I think the edition you sent me is something different from mine; at least as far as I recollect, the last stanza, though of the same sense, was exprest with more spirit. Have you seen Mrs. Thicknesse's book? I have just looked into it, enough to see your name not among Mr. Johnson's nine muses, but in a very private party, consisting of Mrs. Burbault and your humble servant.

Do you know Lady L. Fitzpatrick? I hear she is extremely well spoken of, in every point of view; so I hope Lord S—— will be made ample amends for his former disappointment. Do not you honor the noble spirit of the Irish in raising forces to defend themselves? Since the above was written, I have had the pleasure of receiving

receiving my dear friend's letter from London. It is a comfort in this unsummer-like weather, that a cold north-east wind will render your assemblies, for to assemblies you will go, less dangerous to your health. Our dear Sylph will be the better for your arrival, in many ways, and particularly I hope you will help to cure her despondencies. She is, you know, bewitched by the Opposition, which has its reasons for painting things in the blackest colourings.

I have read only the introduction to Mr. M——'s Poem, which is very touching. I proceeded no further, for didactic verse I cannot read. Either the poetry confounds and perplexes the lesson, or the lesson prosifies the poetry. Always excepting Hesiod and Virgil. Adieu, my dear friend; my heart is ever sincerely yours.

LETTER CLXX.

Deal, *July* 11, 1774.

Your account, my dear friend, of the great amendment in your health, made me very happy, therefore I hope you mean to continue it. Your description of poor —— agrees but too well

well with the account I had heard of him before. It is to be hoped the lady will never awake from her dream of love. Poor soul, her heart wanted an object; and it is one of the evils of retired life, that it supplies very small power of choice. Had she lived in the world, she would have judged by comparison very different from any that she had an opportunity of forming in her situation; in which probably the person who makes so insignificant a figure on the great theatre of society, might appear with much dignity, and as a being of superior order. The misfortune is, that instead of looking without, she did not take the standard from her own mind; and in that case, she would have been secure of any danger of precipitation in her choice. But I do not like your picture of Mr. D——'s rectangular elbows and lengthened visage. I hope they do not indicate any faults in the moral character and temper of this young man. This would indeed be a foundation of real misery. I am very glad you think her sorrowful symptoms are not of much import. All may be very well. "*Nimo nisi suo sensu miser est:*" and it is no matter what objection she may have to a pigmy, if the lady has none. The restraint of duty, and the force of prepossession, will, it is to be hoped, prevent her ever discovering the

want

want of *agrémens* and graces; but her very virtue must make her suffer the more severely, if she finds she has formed a connection with an unworthy character.

Was Mrs. Boone arrived at Tunbridge, or was she dead and buried in the service of the society, before she could escape from town. I congratulate you on having seen Lady Nuneham, who has so lately seen our dear Sylph, and brought so good an account both of her and our dear Mrs. Hancock. However weary you may grow of dullness and pertness, ill health is a much more wearisome thing, so swallow them down as philosophically as you would a dose of bark or rhubarb, or any other little evil, which is necessary to the production of a greater good; and stay quietly where you are, till it is thought right that you should move.

You have seen by the papers, no doubt, the fate of the diving adventurer at Plymouth; but I think they do not mention the strange obstinacy of the poor wretched man, who could not be prevailed upon by persuasion (in which Mr. Blake joined) to suffer the vessel first to make the experiment without him; nor would he take any precaution against the accident of its beating against the rocks. So he was in a great measure, *felo de se*, yet one would think the people who pro-

promoted and encouraged this idle scheme, could not feel themselves very much at ease.

Have you heard what an escape Capt. Fielding has had from a dreadful danger? He was sailing out on a cruize, and on saluting the Admiral, some gunpowder blew up, and set the ship on fire. As it happened in the hinder part of the ship, providentially the flame was soon extinguished. None of the officers were hurt; but the poor marines suffered the most, four were killed and thirty-six wounded, but some of them, thank God, not very dangerously. The ship is so much damaged, as to be unfit to proceed on her cruize, and Capt. Fielding is returned to to Plymouth. On Saturday morning, there was a report in Deal, that the Kent was blown up; but my friends were so good to conceal it from me the whole day, and I was so lucky as not to hear it accidentally till about ten minutes before I received a letter from Mrs. Fielding, who kindly wrote to let me know that Mr. Fielding was safe. Most happily for her, he brought her himself the first news of the accident. Adieu, my dear friend.

LETTER CLXXI.

August 4, 1774.

My dear Friend,

May good health, good spirits, and good weather, give you a perfect enjoyment of your retirement at Sandleford. It is lucky that there is no particular call for your going into Northumberland, as there seems so little probability of your getting there. Indeed if Mr. Montagu perseveres in his resolution of going with you, you are much in the right to find means to decline it. I am not indeed absolutely of the opinion of my friend John Osgood, unless Mr. Montagu is worse than when I left London; but the apprehension of what might happen, in what must be owned a doubtful case, would keep your mind in perpetual agitation and alarm.

On looking over the Monthly Review for July, I saw an advertisement of a Poem by a Mr. Potter. The specimen given was a translation of a Chorus in the Troades of Euripides; and it seems this gentleman proposes to translate all his plays. If the whole work is executed in a manner equal to the little piece he has published, it will be a noble acquisition to our language;

for, as far as I can judge from this specimen, he seems to be strongly possessed of the spirit of Grecian poetry *. I wish you would get either the Review or the Poems, and tell me what you think of this piece.

Your two franks, like Dr. Monsey's bank-bills, may have been in the fire or in the water, or any where else, except in their proper place, the cover of your letter, for very certain it is they were not there. I have often heard more violent thunder than last night; but scarcely ever saw such lightning. To almost every horizontal opening of the sky, before it closed, there succeeded a stream of liquid fire in different directions, and which broke like the explosion of a rocket, and was extremely beautiful.

What a pity that a genius decorated with so many graces as you describe, should be sunk into obscurity, and too probably checked and stifled by the necessary cares, which become a duty under narrow circumstances. But one is very apt to reason absurdly from fixing the standard

* Mrs. Carter's opinion, on a subject of which she was peculiarly qualified to judge, has been confirmed by the event. Mr. Potter's Translation of the three Greek Tragedians gained him great reputation, and it is to be hoped some profit; at least he acquired by it the patronage of Lord Chancellor Thurlow, unsolicited but well-deserved.

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of good and evil by one's own opinion; without considering that no one human creature can judge what will form the happiness of another. There are some determined species of pleasure and pain which are pretty equally felt by the general sense of mankind; but the number of these is small, and what constitutes the happiness of each individual, with regard to the situation of things in this world, is made up of innumerable little circumstances, often imperceptible and incommunicable to any other mind.

It is certainly very flattering to me to be placed in the same line with you; but to whom and upon what occasion, am I indebted for that honor? We have no morning papers here, so I am utterly ignorant whether we are celebrated in verse or prose. The author has ill-timed his praise, and we shall lose much of our celebrity by the prorogation of the Parliament.

Mrs. Chalié has just left Deal. There seems to be a most perfect agreement between her and Miss Ravenshaw, who expresses the highest satisfaction in her situation; and indeed I believe it to be as comfortable as any situation of the kind can be. There is a generosity in Mrs. Chalié's disposition, that will never suffer the person to whom she thinks proper to intrust her children, to feel any of the weight of dependance, for if she

she did, how could she expect her children (for children are much more quick-sighted than people suppose) to look up to her with that respect, without which all her instructions can be of no avail. Miss Ravenshaw, on the other hand, is very obliging and attentive, and would willingly do many little things in the family, more than Mrs. Chalié wishes, for she is very delicate on this subject.

I have just been reading Ferjoo's works; pray read them, if you can get them, but in the mean time, I must send you a little transcript of the character which he gives the English philosophers, with which my national vanity is greatly charmed. I believe there are many Spanish writers whom you will read with esteem, as well as with compassion, in seeing how their natural good sense is shackled and fettered in a perplexed circumlocutory way of expression, which I believe much more frequently arises from necessity than choice. The quantity of false wit in every nation, is perhaps exactly proportioned to the measure of slavery; and I think one may trace this difference in the writings of the French, Italian, and Spanish authors. As I am speaking of the Spaniards, I feel a great inclination to enclose you a description of the Tower of Toledo, which interested me very much. Adieu, my dear friend.

The following description of the Tower of Toledo, is taken from a History of the Conquest of Spain by the Moors. The author professes to have received it from an archbishop who attended Don Rodrigo at the opening it, which happened about the year 713.

"At the distance of a mile from the city of Toledo, towards the East, in the midst of rocks and precipices, stood an ancient Tower, of magnificent structure, though it had suffered by the injuries of all-consuming time. Four fathom beneath it was a cave with a vaulted entrance, and a door hollowed in the living rock, strongly lined with iron, and secured by a great number of locks. Over this door was a Greek inscription, written in cyphers, and of a doubtful meaning; but, according to the opinion of the learned, it imported that—"The king who shall "open this cave, and be able to discover the "wonders contained within it, shall at the same "time discover both good and evil."

"Many kings had attempted to penetrate the mystery of this tower, and had taken every precaution to obviate any mischief from the adventure: but on opening the door, there issued from the dark recesses of the cavern, such a thundering sound, that the earth appeared to sink

sink beneath the feet of the assistants, so that many of them fainted away, and others lost their lives, by the fright.

" To avoid these fatal consequences, being persuaded that the cave was strongly enchanted, they again closed the door with additional locks; concluding, that though it was destined to be opened by a king, the time was not yet come.

" At length, Don Rodrigo, impelled by his unhappy fate, opened the tower; and those of his attendants who were the most courageous, entered in, though not without some degree of fear. After having proceeded a considerable way, they fled back in the utmost consternation and horror, occasioned by a dreadful vision, which they had discovered in the cave.

" The king, enraged at this disappointment, commanded a great number of torches to be lighted, with such precautions that the blast which issued from the cavern, might not extinguish them.

" Rodrigo himself then entered the cave at the head of his attendants. They walked on with a trembling pace, and by degrees, perceived a beautiful square apartment of noble architecture, and in the midst of it, a figure of bronze, of a formidable size. His feet stood on a pedestal of three cubits high. In his hands he held a club,

with which he fiercely beat the ground, and it was from the percussion of the air by these violent strokes, that the terrifying sound arose.

"The king, in the utmost astonishment and fright, began to conjure this fearful apparition, promising that he would leave the cave without doing the least injury, provided he might be indulged with a sight of whatever was contained within it. The statue then ceased to repeat his strokes, and the king and his attendants, having a little recovered their courage, walked over the apartment.

"Upon part of the wall, on the left hand of the statue, they found inscribed—"Unhappy king! "It is to thy misfortune that thou hast entered "here." Turning to the right, they read—"Thou shalt be dispossessed by foreign nations, "and thy people severely chastised." On the back of the statue was inscribed—"I call for the "Arabians." And on his breast—"I do my "office."

"At the entrance of the room, on the top was a round ball, from whence issued a prodigious sound, like the roaring of a torrent.

"The king, after having taken a copy of the inscriptions, finding nothing more to detain him, in deep sorrow and dejection, followed by his attendants, left the cave. They had scarcely turned

turned their backs, when the statue repeated his accustomed strokes.

"Having resolved on a strict silence with regard to what they had seen, they shut the tower, and closed up the door of the cave with a great quantity of earth, that there might remain, in the world, no memorial of the ill omened prodigy, to which they had been witnesses.

"Amidst the deep silence of the following night, near the spot which they had quitted, they heard loud voices, and shouts resembling those of a battle. The country all round was convulsed with a tremendous noise, the ancient tower was swallowed up by the earth, and all that the terrified spectators of the cave had seen, appeared to them like a frightful dream."

LETTER CLXXII.

Deal, *August* 20, 1774.

Long may you, my dear friend, continue to enjoy that vivid spirit and health, which gives the gayest colouring to every flower that is scattered along the walks of life; with many a

rose

rose and myrtle has heaven adorned your path, and long may they flourish in the fairest sunshine.

I hope you will continue to think it too late for your northern expedition this season, especially towards the end of an unfavourable summer. We have had a great deal of blustering weather here, and yesterday afternoon we had a great storm, and a most noble preparation for it. I scarce ever saw the "dread magnificence of heaven," appear in a more awful form. The western horizon was involved in the deepest gloom, through which the lightning vibrated in a manner most singularly beautiful. The great expanse of darkness was rendered the more solemn, by a range of pale clouds of a remarkable colour and form by which it was bounded towards the East. The natural expectation from the appearance of the sky, was thunder; but it ended in a most outrageous wind, which continued about ten minutes, and then sunk into a sober rain.

I can easily conceive the pleasure you must have felt in so agreeable a view of that "*otium cum dignitate*," which you enjoyed in your visit to Sir J A. A timely retreat, after a proper portion of life has been dedicated to the duties of

of public activity, is much more noble and graceful than the being driven into repose by the incapacities and weakness of old age.

I am glad to hear Mr. Hanway * is in better health, he is, I firmly believe, a very worthy well-intentioned man, and of great use in society. It is very happy that *de tems en tems*, there will always arise certain moral characters of very good hearts and very odd heads, of exceeding benefit in a world too much disordered to be set right by the regular process of sober systematical virtue.

I do pity the want of leisure of which you complain, which I know one is apt to feel very impatiently. Yet a long experience has taught me, that it is very possible to have more of that leisure, so emphatically desired, than one has a capacity of employing; and that many hours of uninterrupted time must be suffered to steal away, and leave scarcely any trace behind them, except the vexatious reflection that they have been so little improved. Yet, after all, this is a foolish regret, and proceeds from a wrong principle. It

* Jonas Hanway, whose constant endeavours to do good, and to be of use to the world, seem to merit a less qualified commendation than is here bestowed upon him.

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is by our own fault, if human improvement ever stands still. The languors of illness are as much the subject of life, as the vigorous spirits of health; and the powers that are insufficient for active exertion of understanding and of high attainments are equal to the duty of unrepining submission to the disappointment of favorite aims, and of thankful enjoyment of every permitted good.

No, it is impossible that it could be from serious conviction, it must have been merely a transient thought, or a desire to see how I could brook such an idea, when you speak of annihilation as "preferable to staying always in such a world as this *." Life, with all its portion of toils and

* In Dr. Johnson's opinion mere existence was bliss; and yet his life was sufficiently embittered by bad health, the constant struggles of a religious mind against the infirmities of temper, and during a considerable part of it by poverty. The Editor would not repent of having engaged in this publication, if it were redeemed by no other good but this passage and the preceding paragraph. Homer's opinion, as he puts it into the mouth of Achilles, agrees with Dr. Johnson's.

Μὴ δή μοι θανάτοιο γε παρήυδα, φαίδιμ' Ὀδυσσεῦ·
Βουλοίμην κ' ἐπάρουρος ἐὼν θητευέμεν ἄλλῳ
Ἀνδρὶ παρ' ἀκλήρῳ, ᾧ μὴ βίοτος πολὺς εἴη,
Ἢ πᾶσιν νεκύεσσι καταφθιμένοισιν ἀνάσσειν.

Odyss. xi. 486.

Rendered

and sufferings, is mercifully diversified with such a mixture of ease, and even of positive delights, as must render it greatly preferable to non-existence. Was every prospect to be limited by the grave, what inexpressible horrors must one feel, at the thought of quitting such a system of creation, as engages the attention by every form of variety, strikes by every wonder of magnificence, and charms with every grace and elegance of beauty! How terrible to close one's eyes upon the flowery earth and radiant sun, to "leave the warm precincts of the cheerful day," and sink into a cold, dark, eternal night! Then to think of losing all sense of intellectual pleasures, all the tendernesses of affection, and all the excellencies of

Rendered by Pope, with unusual closeness,

"Rather I chuse laboriously to bear
A weight of woes, and breathe the vital air,
A slave to some poor hind that toils for bread,
Than reign the scepter'd monarch of the dead."

Dr. Clark, in his note on the passage of Homer, quotes also Virgil's

"—— Quam vellent æthere in alto
Nunc et pauperiem et duros perferre labores!"

But it should be recollected that those who had killed themselves, are not represented by the poet as being in the Elysian fields, but in a sort of intermediate state between punishment and happiness at the very entrance of Hell.

Virtue!

virtue! From this dreadful extinction, God be thanked, we are graciously secured. And as much as I have said in profession of my attachment to this world, I heartily join with you in rejoicing that it is not to last for ever. Yet I have but little curiosity concerning any other particulars about a better, than those which are revealed to us. Content and thankful for the promise, which He "who cannot lie" has made, that all who endeavour to fulfil the conditions of happiness, shall infallibly be happy; and convinced that He alone knows what will make us so. The general ideas of perfect health, perfect security, and perfect virtue, are sufficient to support the mind in the hours of pain and languor, to console it amidst the anxieties of precarious good, and to elevate and encourage it, amidst the humiliations of mortal frailty, vainly struggling for an entire conquest over those corruptions of a disordered nature, which can never be completely subdued; but in that state where alone the "spirits of the just will be made perfect." It is very many years since I read Burnet's State of the Dead, but I am going to read it again that I may accompany you. I remember in general that he is a very lively and entertaining writer.

You are a much more industrious reader than I am, for I have not got any farther in Mr. Hume's

Hume's History than the reign of John. So far as I have read, I perfectly subscribe to your judgment of the author. The order and civility of modern times, is, indeed, an inestimable blessing, and however unwilling Mr. Hume might be to allow it, is certainly the gift of Christianity. Barbarity was the disgrace of heroism, not only amongst our rude and violent ancestors, but amongst those nations which are so often extolled as abounding with examples of the highest virtues. Modern compilers give us a fine picture of the manners of heathen antiquity; but their own historians are more honest, and from them one discovers as high instances of barbarity even among the polished and enlightened Greeks as could be practised by the most savage parties of scalping Indians. The battles of Marathon, Thermopylæ, and Platea, were great actions, and performed in a noble cause, and these are extolled by all authors in all ages, while little mention is made of the Peloponesian war, and innumerable others, by which the heroes who so gallantly opposed the Persian tyranny, endeavoured to tyrannize over each other, and pursued their quarrels through such a series of rapine, treachery and bloodshed, that the relation makes one shudder.

It is no wonder that the savage manners of nations

nations professing Christianity, should be so little softened in those dark ages, when the Christian religion was so little understood, that the endowment of a monastery was thought a sufficient atonement for the violation of all the duties of humanity. But ever since the restraints of Popery have been removed, and the Gospel allowed to speak for itself, there has been an astonishing alteration for the better in the general appearance of the Christian world.

By your account of Rousseau's book, I fear it is likely to do much more harm than good, which seems to me to be the case with all his writings. His Eloise is no doubt finely written, but one of the most dangerous and wicked books, in many respects, that I believe ever was published. His Emile was very far from pleasing me; something great and striking there must always be in Rousseau; but with such a mixture of wrong principles and false reasoning, that renders him the most dangerous writer I ever read. It is a pity he does not pursue his own favorite scheme of running wild, and grazing among the animals, whose morals would be in no danger of being relaxed by his stories, nor their principles poisoned by his philosophical whims. Adieu, my dear friend. Many thanks for your kind solicitude about my father; he is still suffering much, but with the true resignation of a Christian.

LETTER CLXXIII.

Deal, *September* 3, 1774.

Your letter found me, my dear friend, in the same melancholy situation as when I wrote last. My hopes and fears have alternately prevailed, as my father seemed better or worse. But any apparent amendment is of so short duration, that I now begin utterly to despair of his recovery, though I fear his illness will be lingering, as he has no fever, and takes a good deal of nourishment. He seldom speaks, but when he does, it is without the least confusion either of understanding or memory. He is extremely patient, though very desirous of his release. My sister would often come and sit with me in his room; but I prevent her as much as possible, as the seeing any one personally concerned only increases my own distress, and I can better support my own troubles alone, than when I am witness to those of my friends. I am upon the whole, I thank God, better than I could expect, and I trust, through his mercy, I shall be enabled to go through whatever is appointed for me.

Indeed, I should never think of finding consolation

lation from the writings of the Stoics under any important trouble, though I think them admirable against little teasing vexations. But though they might effectually cure one from fretting at the loss of a pipkin, they will extend their influence no farther, except on such hearts as can be convinced that friends and pipkins are a kind of *meubles* of precisely equal value.

I am glad you could find so much amusement in your voluminous study of the life of Petrarch. If I was in spirits, and in a disposition for writing, I would combat your assertion that Petrarch was an enthusiast. No enthusiast in love ever wrote a book full of quibbling *concetti*. No enthusiast in friendship ever comforted himself under an appearance of neglect from a friend, by thinking on Pompey and Cornelia *.

It cannot, I think, be supposed, but that in whatever age, or whatever country Homer had

* Petrarch's faults were those of the age and country in which he wrote, but his feelings were his own. Yet perhaps he deceived himself, and rather wished to feel, than actually suffered. Mrs. Carter's expressions may here remind the reader of Dr. Johnson, when he says of Lord Lyttelton, that "he solaced his grief (for the loss of his wife) by writing a long poem to her memory." And that when a certain person began to talk to him of Catiline's conspiracy, he turned himself round, and thought of Tom Thumb.

lived,

lived, it is the manners of that age and country, which he would have described, and his mythology has certainly all those disadvantages which you mention, and, notwithstanding, all that the critics and commentators have said to the contrary, I think there is no passage in which his divinities ever arrive at the sublime. But I said something or other about this in a letter I wrote you after reading Mr. Hurd, which I have forgot, but I will not run the hazard of repeating it. The Celtic superstitions, and the Druidical ceremonies, have certainly contributed much to the sublime of modern poetry; but the highest improvement of it seems to be from the doctrines of revelation, which have opened a general view into the world of spirits, and discovered the agency of good and bad angels *. Milton's guardian spirit in Comus for instance, is a being of which he could never have formed the idea

* It may be presumed that this agency of angels, which forms so delightful and consoling a link between the two worlds, cannot be denied by any person who has studied the Scriptures; yet it is by no means clear, that this notion is not to be drawn from the heathen mythology. The demon of Socrates; the nymph of Numa; the evil genius of Brutus, and perhaps the "*Genius, natale comes qui temperat astrum,—naturæ Deus humanæ*" of Horace, seem to be nearly allied to this system, though this last passage is explained by commentators in a different manner.

from

from any system of heathen mythology. I have, as you bid me, been reading this charming poem. The purity of the morals, the delicacy of the sentiments, the beauty and variety of the images, and the force and propriety of the epithets so captivate the attention, that nothing but an absolute intention of criticising, could make one see the strange absurdities which arise from the confusion of ancient and modern manners. You have mentioned some. There are others I think still more striking. Evening is compared to "a sad votarist in palmer's weeds;" the hermit and his meads; the curfew bell, and the frequent mention of angels, are all inconsistent with the classical system on which his fable is founded. Indeed, this confusion is a predominant fault in all Milton's writings. In the Lycidas, he introduces Neptune, and presently after the "pilot of the Galilean Lake," not to mention several instances of the same kind of impropriety in this, and I believe almost every one of his poems. We have at present, I think, banished the whole rabble of the Greek and Roman divinities from our poetry. The muses and graces may be still tolerated, as they only denote the powers and ornaments of genius and character.

I perfectly subscribe to your judgment of the Penseroso, and Shakespear's ideal beings. As I never

never read Chaucer, I know nothing more of "Combuscan bold," than by his dim grandeur in Milton. Canace, the Ring, and the Wondrous Horse of Brass, always bring to my mind the amous story of Gyges, as it is related in Plato's Republic, and from him by Cicero, in the third book of his Offices. If you do not recollect the story, it is worth your reading.

I have read Longinus, because I thought one must read Longinus; but I believe neither with the admiration or pleasure that he ought to be ead; so far am I from being qualified to translate him, even if there was no other objection. As for Aristotle, I have more than once attempted, but never yet could get through him; his Greek is very crabbed; his manner so very dry and inelegant, and his criticisms so unentertaining, that if I was a Papist his works would be enjoined me for a penance. I could no more judge of the beauties of an author from any of Aristotle's criticisms, than I could of the beauty of Helen, from hearing a surgeon read a very learned and elaborate lecture upon her skeleton. Indeed, I have generally found this to be the case; and I believe nobody that ever read so many Greek and Latin writers ever read so little what others have said about them as I have done. For difficulties in language I have often been obliged to the

commentators, and for this I owe them great gratitude.

My kind and amiable companion, of whom you desire some history, is Miss Foote, she is the daughter of a clergyman, who some years ago purchased Charlton, near Barham Downs. He has been dead about two years. Her mother is a very sensible, well bred, and respectable character. She is sister to Sir Horace Mann, the Envoy at Florence. Miss Foote has been for two years in bad health, which has much checked her pursuit of improvement; but she has nobly compensated the loss of application, by strengthening all her powers of thought and reflection to a very uncommon degree; her health is greatly mended by our sea breezes, and I hope she will regain her strength, though that period seems still distant.

Though I never saw the Duchess of L——, she was so much connected with Mrs. Vesey and Mrs. Crofton, that I could not help feeling quite vexed at the article you mention. The report of the marriage I believe is certainly not true; I wish it was equally certain, that it never will be so. Mr. O—— is tutor to the children, but not a clergyman. I lately saw a person who gave me an account of the behaviour of Lord B. which was really shocking. Among other things, he

treated

treated the character of the Duchess with such scandalous abuse, that it exasperated even the gentle spirit of sweet mild Lady L. C. to such a degree, that she told him *toutes ses verités*, which was indeed a pretty copious subject for declamation.

I grieved for Mrs Boscawen when I read the article in the papers from Spa of Mr. Boscawen's death. The finishing stroke might be sudden, but there had been long warning of its approach. I never saw the character of mortal distemper more strongly impressed on a countenance than on his last winter. I felt sorry when I read the account of his death, as I had often felt compassion for him during his life, as it appeared to me that the general opinion treated him with much too great severity. But the world too often passes sentence on a character merely from its effect in social conversation, without any regard to the alleviating circumstances from whence many little disagreements may be derived, without any determined wrong disposition of heart. This poor young man, I believe, was hurt by too much early indulgence, and the perpetual attention from his family, which would too naturally impress on his mind too high a sense of his own importance, and conceal from him the restraint, which, to render him agreeable in society, as

well as upon higher consideration, it would be necessary for him to lay on his own manners and conversation. I suppose you know that Mr. de Luc * is gone abroad with Mrs. Schullenberg, who proposes to put herself under the care of Dr. Tissot for an asthma. This will probably help to establish Mr. de Luc's favor at court. Adieu.

LETTER CLXXIV.

Deal, *September* 22, 1774.

I REJOICE with you, my dear friend, that you are fairly rid of the uncomfortable hesitation about a Northumberland expedition, it always appeared probable that you would escape it, but determination is better than mere probability.

I am glad to hear your are come to an *eclaircissement* with Dr. Monsey, what could the man possibly find to put him out of humour? But

* The well known philosopher and geologist. He afterwards married Miss Cooper, a lady well acquainted both with Mrs. Carter and Mrs. Montagu.

he

he is the "unpossible Doctor," and the possibilities that concern other people are quite unnecessary to a genius like his. I am a gainer, however, by the odd incident, as it furnished you with a subject for some of the most admirable reflections on the wretched influence of *humour* that ever were writ. I want your reflections every hour of my life on every other subject; but, alas, you are not at hand. However, I have common sense enough to keep me in good humour, and carry me through the routine of the day; and to enable me to make a dish of tea, and keep me from running the needle into my fingers when I am at work; and as nobody here loves me either the better or the worse for being either wise or silly, I may subsist very well without spirit or taste, or sentiment, or a hundred other fine things, which you reckon amongst the necessaries of life, and which I think you are in all equity engaged to furnish me with whenever I am so happy as to be with you.

I am provoked at —— 's indiscriminating good nature, which after all is just as unreasonable, and of much worse consequence than the Doctor's odd whims, in proportion as the influence of such a character is stronger and more extensive. Indeed, all constitutional qualities, good or bad, are the source of error, and of mischief, unless

unless under the guidance of one undeviating principle *. Do not forget, indeed, it highly imports both him and you to remember it. For you alone of all those with whom he converses, or probably ever did converse, are capable of impressing this principle upon his heart.

I grieve much for our amiable friend's misfortune; and it is a great happiness that the sufferings of virtue here, are balanced by the divine consolation of future prospects, or the best people would often be in a more pitiable situation than the worst. The noise and racket of the world has a speedy operation in stifling the sense of grief, and often prevents its most severe attacks, by weakening those ties of affection, which the author of our nature originally fixed so strongly on the heart. The succours of religion are of a very different kind; they enable the mind indeed to resign with calmness, and to suffer without complaining, yet at the same time, leave it to the exercise of faith and humility, by

* This sentiment is surely admirable, and perhaps has also the rare merit of originality. Its truth at least cannot be doubted by any one who believes, that there is no other sure guide of action, but principle derived from the Gospel; no other certain and fixed difference between right and wrong, but such as is made by the revealed will of God.

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cheering it rather with future hopes, than blunting the edge of present feeling.

I have read the controversy between Hume and Rousseau; no one acquainted with the strange turn of mind which discovers itself throughout Rousseau's works, can wonder at any thing which he takes into his head. A man who converses only with the phantoms of his own imagination, will always think and act incomprehensibly in the transactions of real life. That he is mad, cannot I think be doubted; happy is it for him if great part of that alienation of reason is not chargeable to his own account, or at least was not originally so. There was one thing appeared to me pretty striking in Mr. Hume's letter, where mentioning a circumstance which serves to render Rousseau utterly contemptible and ridiculous, he thinks proper to preface it by calling him his *friend*. Indeed, there is no reason to suppose, that the accusation itself can be very well grounded, that Rousseau represents himself more wretched than he is. A bewildered understanding, a singular temper, and a spirit which seems impatient of all social restraints, are too real causes of unhappiness, to leave much ground for the suspicion of affectation. People may give themselves what airs of superiority and independence they please, but even the wisest

and

and best of human creatures are too weak and too defective not to need all the assistances which arise from the mutual contributions of social life.

My father, I grieve to say, continues in the same suffering state. My spirits, I thank God, are better than I could possibly expect; and I have now got a regular nurse, which allows me to leave him, and take some exercise. In one of my rambles I wished much for you, to see a picture with which I think you would have been much pleased. I was in a very pretty field, bounded on one side by a tall hedge row. Two of the trees joined their boughs by an inclination which formed a Gothic arch, in the centre of which, in the "*Contanza*," appeared Sandown castle, not at such a distance as to be indistinct, nor near enough to crowd upon the eye, and fill the arch. It was, taken with all its accompaniments, one of the most pleasing regular pictures I ever saw.

I had a letter lately from our dear Sylph, who talks with some degree of certainty of coming to England in October. You will think I have taken a political antipathy to Lord Mahon, when I tell you I am scandalized at his W——'s advertisement. I have nothing to object to his opposition to measures, which I believe may have been very wrong, but he seems, except in one

incl-

incidental expression, totally to have annihilated the King, as a part of the Constitution. Does he consider the electors of Westminster as the citizens of Geneva *. Adieu, my dear friend. I rejoice to hear you are so well.

LETTER CLXXV.

Deal, October 8, 1774.

You are very kind, my dear friend, in expressing so much solicitude about me. My father continues in pretty much the same melancholy state he was in when I wrote last. He has long been very desirous of death; but expresses his resignation to the will of God, whatever time he thinks proper to continue him in his present state. I am very thankful to the Almighty for the blessing of his perfect composure, and exemplary patience, which I trust will be granted him to the end.

I ought not to say so much to you on this subject, but it so engages all my attention, that it is

* In which republic, as it then was, Lord Mahon, afterwards better known as Lord Stanhope, had been educated.

not

not easy to withdraw my mind from it. I now confine myself to taking a little air, in the small court before the house, for I cannot bring myself to take a walk, as my spirits are so hurried, when I am absent, that it would do me more harm in that respect, than the air and exercise would do me good.

The lady you mention is Miss Foote's aunt. Her father and uncle married two sisters. She continues her kind visits, and they do me a great deal of good. Miss Foote's younger sister is married to a Mr Ross, of Cromartie. Do you know him? It is to be hoped he has a great deal of merit to reward her for such a terrible exile from her own family *.

Gratian in some parts of his writings characterizes the genius of several poets, by the instruments on which he supposes them to have played. He says that Calliope took up a lyre which belonged to Petrarch, that it was formed of the purest and whitest ivory, but so excessive cold, that it chilled her fingers. Are you at all acquainted with Gratian's works? They are a jum-

* Mr. Ross met with an early and unhappy fate; and his widow afterwards married Sir Robert Herries, and resided in St. James's-street, where her weekly parties for conversation were well known, and respectably attended.

ble

ble of good, bad, and indifferent; but, upon the whole, worth reading *.

I wish you well through with the laudable task of entertaining your country neighbours. It would indeed be very vexatious, to be obliged to sacrifice the hours of improving and delightful retirement, to the fatigues of dull and uninteresting conversation, if a general regard to society was not a necessary duty. Many of the forms of the world are no doubt very blameable, and very silly; but those are founded on the truest good sense, by which people of distinguished talents are sometimes dragged out of their closets, and from societies formed by particular choice, and obliged to keep up that connexion with the general community of their fellow-creatures, which ought not to be entirely given up either to solitary study, or the intercourse of private friendships. If the eminently wise and good were to converse only with themselves, and with each other, the circle of wisdom and of goodness would become much too contracted. In the most unentertaining companies, there are often persons who, however destitute of shining accomplishments, may have many useful plain vir-

* Like Martial's epigrams:—
"Sunt bona, sunt quædam mediocria, sunt mala plura."

tues,

tues, that entitle them to encouragement and esteem; and the ignorant and the dull have as much a claim to be instructed and amused by the talents of the learned and the agreeable, as the poor have to be assisted by the money of the rich; and even the bad have a claim to every opportunity that can properly be allowed them, of growing better by the conversation of the good. To be sure much more might be said on this subject, but I wish you may not have thought long ago that I am got into an immoderate fit of talking.

I have never read Mr. Warton on Spenser, nor did I know he had writ on this subject, but I have been always so well pleased with his criticisms on other authors, that I should be glad to see what he has written on this. If you think of it, I shall be obliged to you if you will be so good to bring his Spenser with you to London for my instruction next winter. I am sensible how much below the dignity both of Spenser and his commentator it is, to talk in the same breath of a receipt for preserving oranges; but while it is in my head, I will beg the favor of you to bring me likewise the method how they are to be done in slices, which I think you told me you had learnt in the North, where to be sure the good people have the best art of giving fruit a sweetness from sugar,

as it can have none from the sun. Adieu, my dear friend.

LETTER CLXXVI.

Deal, *October* 26, 1774.

As the account in my last letter will have made you kindly solicitous to hear from me again, I cannot forbear writing to inform you, that it pleased God to release my father from all the sufferings of mortality on Monday night. I have an inexpressible loss, but I have great reason to be thankful to the divine goodness, which extended the enjoyment of such a blessing as my father's life was to all his family to so long a date. He retained his understanding and his senses to the last, and left a world which he had for some time wished to quit, with such an unruffled calm and composure, as I firmly trust was an earnest of a blessed change; he died without a struggle or a groan *.

* The memory of Dr. Carter was revered by all his family to the last moment of their lives. They never spoke of him but with the highest degree of respect and affection. He appears to have been a man of strong understanding, deep and extensive learning, and of a remarkably upright, pure, and blameless character.

I am

I am better than I could have expected to be after such a conclusion of the anxieties which I have suffered for so many weeks, though I thankfully acknowledge that they have been intermixed with many comforts. At present I have a sad desolate feeling at my heart, and an oppressive weight upon my spirits, that I cannot shake off; but this I trust will soon be relieved, and be succeeded by pleasing and comfortable sentiments of gratitude, respect, and affection, to the memory of a father, to whom I had such uncommon and inexpressible obligations.

I hope that all the business which is to be done in conjunction with the rest of the family, and the settling my own establishment, will be finished by the usual time of my coming to town. In the meanwhile, as soon as the last sad ceremony is over, I will walk, and am persuaded I shall be the better for air and exercise. Adieu, my dearest friend.

LETTER CLXXVII.

Deal, *November* 25, 1774.

It is scarcely to be expected, my dear friend, that either you or I should be tolerably well in such weather; it has, however, dealt less severely with you than with me, for I have been very ill for the last fortnight, and am still sufficiently uncomfortable. I scarcely ever remember winter to have arrived at such high perfection by the middle of November. We have had for many days a quantity of snow, hail, rain, and wind. On Saturday evening there was a most furious tempest: it heartily frightened me, as Mrs. Pennington was out, and it rose so suddenly, that I did not know but she might be in it. Happily, however, she was not set out, having been drinking tea with Mrs. Douglas. The violence did not last above half an hour, and every thing was quiet when she came home, *wondering* all the way she came, why people had *thrown* such a quantity of bricks and tiles into the street. The truth was, that my two tranquil sisters had sat quietly by the fire-side; and of a storm that had shattered chimneys, and untiled houses, had broken

broken the ships from their anchors, and blown them out of the Downs, none of their senses had given them the least intimation. It was very happy this outrageous hurricane did not continue till the time of high water, as in all probability every building within reach of the sea would have been carried away by its fury. God send our dear Mrs. Vesey safe to us: I hope and trust she was not in this gale.

I have read Mr. M. Robinson's * pamphlet: it is very ingenious, and what does more honor to the author, is written with a decency and seriousness which is very respectable. How far some of the fundamental arguments against taxation are right, I am not able to judge, not being sufficiently acquainted with the subject. It only appeared to me, that if the reason drawn from a want of representation is to be admitted, no very inconsiderable part of the inhabitants of our island fall pretty much under the same predicament.

I ought before this to have thanked you for your Highland poetry, but as I before said, I have really been too unwell for any thing, but do not you, my dear friend, feel any uneasiness about me, for I really feel very little for myself; on the contrary, I find very high reason to be

* Afterwards the second Lord Rokeby, Mrs. Montagu's eldest brother.

thankful

thankful that I have no worse pains than what a pillow can relieve, and that I am in a situation of life which allows me that relief. Indeed where a progress in knowledge is the principal pursuit, and ambition the predominant passion of the heart, it must appear extremely grievous to be reduced to a state in which all the faculties of the understanding are blunted, and every spring of action is relaxed. But unavoidable *dullness* is no mortification except to the temper of *vanity*; and the incapacity of being important and useful in society, is no *misfortune*, but in the false estimation of *pride*. The situation which renders one unfit for active duties, yet leaves power and opportunities enough for the exercise of the more quiet and silent virtues*; and till one has arrived at a proficiency in these—and alas! how much does one find still to be done!—It would be insolent to complain of not being appointed to act in a character which would require higher exertions. But all this can be very little edifying to *you*, however necessary to render *me* easy and cheerful, under the sense of my absolute insignificance. To make you some

* See the conclusion of Goldsmith's delightful poem, "The Traveller;" in which the poet applies the same sentiment to political oppression, which Mrs. Carter does here to mental or corporeal incapacity.

amends for all this, I will transcribe an Italian sonnet, which is lying by me, and if you have not seen it before, I think you will thank me for it.

Oimè, i bei carmi, oimè le grave e schiette
Prose vetuste! oimè l'una e l'altra arte!
Oimè le Greche, e le Latine carte,
Anzi le Tosche pur mi son disdette!
Un fier dolor struggemi il capo, e infette
Le vie de' lievi spirti, ond' ha ogni parte.
Senso e vigor, gia tutto a parte, a parte
Mi spossa, e in punto di finir mi mette,
Deh finiss'io, che se per me non sono
Piu i dolci studi, e'l fato ha si disposto,
Che fommi aquesta oscura valle ed empia?
Padre del ciel, di qui ugualmente dono
Son la vita, e la morte, o fa ch'io testo—
Ma no: no'l mio volere, il tuo s'adempia!

I long to know how you bear the fatigues of your Northumberland life. I was in hopes you would have escaped it this year, for it grieves me to think that the health and spirits you have been acquiring all the summer, instead of soaring into regions of intellectual delight, should be suffocated in the damps of a coal-mine. Yet one is apt to talk mighty foolishly upon these occasions. For after all, the true proof of wisdom is doing the thing which ought to be done. And though to be sure, if you had chosen to have staid behind, you might have appeared a much finer lady, and

a much

a much finer genius, and you might have sat in your Chinese room, and your Athenian room, and might have written more "Dialogues of the Dead." You are certainly a much more reasonable being, and more laudably engaged in accompanying Mr Montagu, in assisting him in his business, and the entertainment of his North country neighbours. I hope, however, your whole stock of health and spirits will not be exhausted, but that you will have some left for your own use, and to gladden me with by the time I come to London, as I hope to do quite at my usual time, and the prospect is a great comfort to me. I do likewise enjoy the thoughts of the very pretty scheme you have been so good as to plan for me of going with you to Welwyn, and heartily wish we may find it practicable. But to the season of "fine prospects and the harmony of birds," there is absolutely an age.

I am very sorry our friend is disappointed of her house. I am really quite impatient to hear that she is fixed in a house to her mind, for I think such a kind of *quietus* must do her good. Few people seem to me to have stronger reason to form the wish of Horace,

Sit modus lasso maris, et viarum,
Militiæque.

She has literally travelled sea and land enough to tire any reasonable person, and there is scarcely any metaphorical warfare, I suppose, more perfectly harassing than that of a court life.

The Highland poetry is extremely fine. I have heard it disputed whether it is genuine, but of this there does not appear to me the least doubt. There is one striking proof of its being composed in the earliest times, that there is not, I believe, a single image but what is taken from the views of nature, and scarcely the least allusion to any art or science whatever; an omission scarcely possible in an imposture of modern invention *.

Pray let me hear when you mean to draw nearer to me, for I do not feel well pleased to know you are so far off.

Ever yours.

* The poetry here spoken of is Macpherson's Ossian. Mrs. Carter never changed her opinion about its merits, abstractedly considered, but was not equally clear afterwards concerning its genuineness. She still thought, however, that the ground-work was genuine, but much altered, and the last parts supplied by the editor.

LETTER CLXXVIII.

Deal, *December* 1, 1774.

INDEED, my dear friend, the world would find good reason to quarrel with me, if you must take a share in my incapabilities; however, things are mending, and I am taking some steps towards getting myself ready for London. It is to be hoped that the astonishing quantity of snow which fell from morning to night last Sunday, will have exhausted all the damp. The poor dear Penningtons' had a most dreadful journey on Saturday. God be thanked they got safe home at last, but so compleatly frightened, that probably they may for the future be more inclined to take the advice of their friends The Doctor could not be prevailed on to neglect his church. This was no doubt a very laudable motive, but he might have considered, that none of his congregation would be the better for going to church, if they could be unreasonable and uncharitable enough to expect him at the hazard of his life.

Yes, indeed, I was struck by the account you mention. Such characters as have figured with great *eclat* on the theatre of the world, present at

at their exit many a solemn and important lesson to every attentive spectator *. Among the rest, when it is considered by what a complication of right and wrong, even those whose conduct is the least equivocal, commonly arrive to the highest human distinctions, it should render the insignificant and the unillustrious thankful for the humble lot, which confines them to the simple path of regular duty, and furnishes an unperplexed account at the end of their journey.

I thank God every thing relative to business in my father's concerns is all most happily and amicably settled. My father has left his fortune equally among his children. It was not large, but he gave them an inheritance of a nobler kind, from his instructions, his example, and his care of their education, for which we cannot be too grateful. When I return from London, I shall have full leisure to compose myself into that state

* This expression may perhaps remind the reader of a fine passage in Johnson's Imitation of the Tenth Satire of Juvenal:—

"In life's last scene what prodigies surprise,
Fears of the brave and follies of the wise!"

But the poet alludes only to the natural decay of the strength and faculties at the close of life; while the Christian moralist draws her awful lesson from a review of the conduct of the dying person, while in possession of all his powers, and the effect of that conduct on his future state.

of

of tranquillity and cheerfulness, which by the Divine assistance I hope to acquire, in a thankful enjoyment of the blessings with which it has pleased God to distinguish my life.

Mrs. Barbault's acquiescence is an excellent proof of her good sense and right principles, a consistency which is unhappily not very common in people who have made such a kind of choice. May she never find out that the gratifying one favorite wish, does not necessarily preclude every other.

Lord and Lady Holdernesse are returning to England, from whence it is inferred his health is worse. Poor Lady Clermont is just embarked for Montpelier in a most miserable state of health and spirits. The account I heard of her was quite affecting. I suppose you have heard that Mrs. Coltesworth has resigned from ill health, with a pension of 300l. a-year, and 100l. for Master Blomberg. I do not hear who is to succeed her.

Notwithstanding all your wicked wit, our poor dear Sylph would be too really unhappy, to be whimsical in such a situation as I hope will not happen, though there is, I believe, from other accounts than those which are dictated by her fears, some reason for apprehension. I heartily join with you in thinking he would be a loss to society,

society, as he has many amiable qualities, and would have many more, if he formed his standard of action from his own mind, for I am inclined to think he is not vicious so much from inclination, as from the example of the world. If it was a fashionable thing for wits and scholars, and lord lieutenants, and other distinguished personages, to be true to their wives, probably our friend would not have found him an unfaithful husband. The poor man is ill rewarded for his complaisance to a worthless world. It has sunk his character, and he has not that place in society, that his understanding, and his many good qualities, might justly claim, if he allowed them a free and natural operation. But does not this deferring of the hope of seeing our dear Sylph make your heart sick? I feel it heavily at mine.

I am glad poor Lady Clive has so useful and humane a friend to assist her in her distressed situation. It always appeared to me that his wife made a very prudent choice, in sacrificing all views of more splendid distinction, to the real comfort of such a husband.

I wish the young couple you mention may be happy in their private capacity; but what a fermentation of nobility and republicanism, and all manner of clashing and heterogeneous principles, will probably be entailed on posterity by such a union!

union! Adieu, my dear friend. I hope soon to hear you have changed your climate.

LETTER CLXXIX.

December 18, 1774.

MANY thanks to you, my dear friend, for kindly preventing any disagreeable impression from the report you mention. It is true, indeed, that I have but little faith in a newspaper; nor should I naturally expect to receive any intelligence, in which you were concerned, by that conveyance; yet whatever may be urged by reason or experience, there is a certain uncomfortable feeling arising from mere possibilities, which one would always be glad to avoid. This weather, I think, must be very beneficial to Mr. Montagu. The change here is prodigious. The snow, which in the fields near this place measured three feet deep on Friday, is so effectually vanished, that yesterday there was scarcely a spot of white to be seen. Most happily, with this excessive quantity of snow, we had no frost, though it had frozen pretty strongly before it fell. Our Kentish papers say there was not any snow beyond Sitting-

Sittingbourne; so possibly you will think I am talking in my sleep; but indeed I have had many a sensible proof of my being awake.

Mrs. Howe and Miss Cooper write me very prosperous accounts of our society *, which seems likely to go on in a flourishing way. There will, I believe, be some new regulations, and among the rest a prohibition to the tables, not to give any sums of money. Some of the most respectable of our managers objected strongly to this proceeding last year. Mrs. Howe, who thought differently as I did, tells me she is nearly brought over to change her opinion. I wait till I hear the point more fully discussed, before mine is determined. I am afraid it is too true, that we have been more imposed on in these cases than in any others.

The accounts from Lady Dartrey are, I thank God, so perfectly good, that by the time I come to town, I hope to find the dear little boy has been often in the air, and the infection quite over. Most completely indeed are Lord and Lady Dar-

* The Ladies' Charitable Society; an admirable institution, which perhaps still exists, and in which the ladies who composed it, gave their time as well as money to the poor. They met at their own houses, and had separate tables for the different districts, or parishes, to which their charity extended.

trey

trey entitled to your description of them; and one can never doubt in general of the Divine blessing on them: yet as human ignorance knows not in what real blessings consist, human weakness is always ready to take alarm, while any interesting point is depending. All who know them will rejoice, that it has pleased God to indulge the tenderest wishes of their own hearts.

What you say of the extravagance and luxury of the lower ranks of people is too well founded; but it is unhappily equally true, that they receive too much encouragement from general example, in a country where each order of society presses upon that which is above it. Perhaps the mischief has still worse consequences in the middling classes than in the lowest, and vanity betrays the one into more evils than appetite the other. *Mais c'est une grande question*, and I have not time to enlarge on the caps, and hats, and gauze, and blond, and the rest of the frippery, and "*nugæ quæ in seria ducunt mala.*"

I the other day met with an account of the Oriental clock, which was so much admired some years ago; and it appears to me to have been a work of surprising magnificence and ingenuity, and, what often accompanies both magnificence and ingenuity, very false taste. It is a pity that the artist, who seems to have framed the mecha-

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nism with so high a degree of perfection, had not been assisted by some poetical genius in the design. I should think the properties of Time, the most valuable of all our earthly possessions, if well disposed of, might have furnished a great variety of highly beautiful allegorical representations, much better adapted to the intention of a clock marking its progress, than green dragons spitting pearls; but whether they might have been so well adapted to the genius of a Nabob, or a Mogul, I cannot tell.

One of my friends here desired me to read the comedy of the "Indiscreet Lover," which I have read accordingly. Have you ever read it? The moral has evidently a very right tendency; but there is so much profligacy and licentiousness in the conversation of the vicious characters, as renders it very offensive, and nearly as disgusting as the Beggar's Opera.

I hope to be so happy as to see you before the end of this month. This circumstance I must always think on with pleasure, and indeed I shall in general be glad for the present to change the scene. This house is at present in such disorder and confusion from the alterations which are become either necessary or convenient, that I am perpetually reminded of the melancholy change of my situation. By the time I return

to

to it, all I hope will be got into regularity, and that I shall sit down for the remainder of my life, in cheerful tranquillity and thankfulness, for the great blessings I owe to a gracious Providence.

I congratulate you most sincerely on the safe arrival of our welcome inhabitants of the enchanting blue-room in Bolton Row; pray my kindest remembrance to them.

Yours, &c.

LETTER CLXXX.

Deal, *May* 12, 1775.

I AM mighty willing to believe that by this time you are, my dear friend, beginning to have some curiosity to know what is become of me. If one of the birds which sung on my way home from Canterbury, would have conveyed any intelligence of me, you should have had it before now; but I could not conveniently get within reach of the post till to-day. I will now give you an account of my proceeding from the time I left you, when, to say truth, I felt quite peevish and capricious, at leaving you with those, who would by their agreeable conversation,

take up your attention, which just then I was unreasonable enough to wish to be employed on me alone. Dont be alarmed at this silly confession, as if I was not satisfied with the kind affection you have shewn me in a thousand instances. Though my heart to be sure is sufficiently romantic, yet a poor dull head perpetually gravitating towards common sense, restrains and keeps it in tolerable order, and I am, upon the whole, very conscionable and quiet.

I had a tolerable trial of my patience in my journey to Canterbury. The good men and women with whom I was confined, were as unentertaining as dormice, yet, as they bore the figure of human creatures, and might be, for ought I know, of more use in society than I am; I did not think myself at liberty to shock their ideas of good manners, by drawing *la Mort d'Abel* out of my pocket, which I longed for so much the more impatiently as I had received it from you. I have made myself amends, however, by reading it since, and have read it with great delight. It may probably be very defective in the conduct as an Epic Poem, but the manners and sentiments are charming, and several parts of it extremely affecting. The specimens which the translator has given of the author's Pastorals make one long to see the rest.

But

But to return to my journey, I got to Canterbury very safe on Wednesday evening, and the next morning sat forward on my walk towards Deal. I was offered an escort which I rejected as an incumbrance, choosing to follow my own devices, and walk over hill and dale without controul by myself. The morning was quite enchanting, and I sometimes sat me down to rest on a bank embroidered by violets and primroses, and canopied by all the verdure of spring, where possibly I might look as *considerable* as poor Mrs. Fielding, when she was guilty in a like situation of the enormous omission of not falling flat upon her nose before the august presence of Mrs. ——. Indeed for sometime I pleased myself at intervals, with forming very magnificent ideas of the liberty and independance, in which I past these solitary hours, without being indebted to any human voice, or even to a book for any part of my entertainment. I know not how many compliments I might have paid upon this occasion, to the self-sufficiency of my own wisdom, if to the utter subversion of all my pride, I had not been struck by the wholesome reflection, that the solitude in which I so greatly exulted, owed its principal charm to the uninterrupted opportunity it gave me of conversing with the friends from whom I had so lately parted. All the triumphs of

of independence vanished at this conviction, and, in consequence, I became wonderfully less savage and philosophical; but, as I drew near the end of my walk, my thoughts were less elevated, and my motions more sober; and still more to sober them, I unfortunately sprained my ancle, which convinced me that I, who, in the morning, (we might say of life *) had felt as if I could soar like an eagle, in the evening, must be content to waddle home like a tame goose. Adieu, my dearest friend, I hope for a letter to-morrow, as I long to know how you do.

* Both moralists and poets have often used this touching as well as obvious theme of similitude. There are, indeed, few reflecting minds that have not, at some time or other, compared the course of human life with the morning and evening of the day, and with the seasons of the year:

——— "Pass some few years,
Thy flowering spring, thy summer's ardent strength,
Thy sober autumn fading into age;
And pale concluding winter comes at last,
And shuts the scene."

THOMSON'S "Winter."

LETTER CLXXXI.

Deal, *June* 3, 1775.

Many thanks to you, my dear friend, for rejoicing my heart by a better account of your health. I am sorry you have occasion to return to the suffocating heat of London, and shall long to hear you are set out on your Northern expedition. We have had hardly any rain here; yesterday it thundered very much indeed on the French coast, and seemed to be approaching to us in a dark sky, most beautifully diversified with coloured clouds; but it all ended in a dreary cold fog.

I am glad to find you seem pleased with Maundrel's Travels, which, in spite of a bad style, and disagreeable manner, is, I think, a very useful and entertaining account. To have rendered it completely excellent, the author should have been capable of making such observations upon his subject, as those for which I am obliged to your letter. I believe you are right in thinking it might be dangerous to trust oneself amidst these

sacred ruins. Yet I hardly ever read any description of the scenes * of those awful transactions, in which the whole race of mankind, through every period of existence, is so deeply interested, without a wish of being transported thither; but a moment's recollection is sufficient to check such an inclination, when it is considered how little connection there is between the starts of a local and temporary devotion, and the constant temper of the spiritual religion of the Gospel. There are few passages in history more shocking, than the description of the taking of Jerusalem, by the Crusaders, who waded sword in hand, through the blood of twenty thousand of their fellow-creatures, to prostrate themselves at the sepulchre of the "Prince of Peace!"—If the most striking effect produced by sensible objects, was any real assistance to the improvement of true piety, many such memorials no doubt would have been appointed, by a higher authority than that of the

* It may perhaps admit of a reasonable doubt, whether the real scenes of our Saviour's passion are still in existence. After the first destruction of Jerusalem, in which *not one stone* was *left upon another*, and its various sieges after it was rebuilt, there is no probability that any genuine vestige of those "sacred ruins" should remain. It seems surprising that this obvious difficulty should not present itself in a stronger light, to Sandys, Maundrel, and other travellers.

Church

Church of Rome*. But He, who "knew what "was in man," with equal wisdom and goodness, avoided the least encouragement to that propensity of our disordered nature, by which we so eagerly seize on every compensation for the difficult task of a strictly regulated life; and taught us to secure our duty and our happiness, not by the parade of ostentatious superstition, and the weak and momentary effect of local and external sanctity; but by that perpetual intercourse between God and the soul, which is the only vital principle of true religion, and internal reformation.

I am afraid I do not like Bajazet so well as you would have me, but I hope you will be mollified in consideration of my being as well pleased as a French tragedy can please me; with Mithridate, the character of Monime is strikingly beautiful;

* This is a just and striking argument. Under the old Dispensation faith was assisted by sensible objects; under the new and more perfect, our Lord seems to have thought it needless or improper, for he appointed none. Yet, as the nature of man in his present state must be confessed to be carnal, and not spiritual, almost every denomination of Christians, in every age, have deviated from this great principle; and have endeavoured to assist their devotion, if not to compensate for the want of it, by forms, ceremonies, local observances, splendour, and sensible objects of various kinds.

without weakness it is gentle, and without haughtiness great. That of Mithridate is well exprest, and he makes love, not *en marquis*, but *en barbare*, yet with such a degree of elevation and sentiment as belonged to his composition; for Mithridate, though a lion and a fox, was not, I think, a hog. I think you will allow that Racine, in this piece, profited as much by Plutarch, as Shakespear has in his Julius Cæsar.

As you prefer the pathetic in tragedy, to the sublime, how is it possible you should be so little favorable to poor Euripides, who possesses this talent in so remarkable a degree? And in contradiction to your own opinion you prefer Sophocles, who is not so often pathetic as sublime! I think I can explain the reason of this, *en attendant*, that you explain it better for yourself. The pathetic must arise from familiar occurrences, and the scenes of common life; it is in these that the manners chiefly take place, and the Grecian manners you do not like, and it is for this reason that you are so little pleased with Euripides. To say truth, there is a *grossiereté* in the manners of even the most civilized of the ancients, which is often very disagreeable. The delicacies of sentiment, and of external behaviour, were introduced into the world, with those delicacies of

virtue.

virtue, which were taught by that Institution, which extended its influence to the internal regulation of the affections of the heart, and of the powers of the understanding.

I believe I understand what you mean by that pathetic, which is often taken for the sublime; and yet I question whether that effect can be produced without a real mixture of both. There is, I believe, very often the pathetic, without the least degree of the sublime; but the sublime seldom fails to produce the pathetic. The grandeur and force of the objects that enlarge and elevate the understanding, subdue and soften the heart, to a comparative sense of human weakness and imperfection. But, I believe, it may be for your emolument that I should follow your example, and suspect that I am talking nonsense. It will be well for you and myself if my suspicions have as little foundation as yours.

Poor Mrs. Macaulay! so you will not read her book, I cannot help it; I will, as I have a much higher opinion of her talents than you have. I am but very little acquainted with her, but in a *tête-à-tête* conversation of between two and three hours that we once had; she appeared to me to have a very considerable share both of sense and knowledge. Have you read her character of

James I?

James I? I was obliged to run it over in a great hurry, but it appeared to me to be drawn with judgment and spirit.

I know not how well to analyze my feelings and my own wishes about your going abroad. If the putting it off till next year at all implied the probability of the whole scheme being laid aside, the choice would be easily determined. But the having the thought of your absence hanging so long like a dark cloud before my eyes, makes me, I think, rather wish it was fairly over. Besides that I hope, and it is the only circumstance that consoles me, for that gap which your absence will form in my system, that a more favourable climate might help to establish your health.

What wretched accounts of the state of things in America, and what folly in the measures on all sides, which have involved the nation in such a difficulty! The government by urging an unprofitable right, if a right it be, and the opposition by heightening the refractory spirits of the colonists! My heart aches for the Howe family and Mrs. Boscawen, and, alas, how many others are there who dread the arrival of every ship. The Sukey came into the Downs this week, and landed a thousand letters. Some came to persons in this place; there is little or no difference between

between the private accounts which I have heard, and the public. Adieu, my dearest friend.

LETTER CLXXXII.

Deal, *June* 14, 1775.

MANY thanks to you, my dearest friend for your kind account of your arrival at Sandleford. I long to know what you do not mention, that your sleep has been better than when you was in London. The flatness of your spirits is a necessary consequence of their having been so much harassed, which only time can remove. When the mind has been totally engaged by any one subject of attention, however painful, it feels a vacancy from the removal, which cannot suddenly be supplied by any other.

I have been reading with great delight the Letters on Chivalry which you was so kind as to give me. You too well know how very a Goth I am, not to believe that I am very often of the author's opinion, and a rebel against the usurped authority of the classics. Indeed the light and delicate turn of the Grecian genius, and the cool correctness of the Roman writers, do not seem capable of those vast and terrific powers, that fill and

and awe the imagination, in the productions of the Gothic muse. Homer may appear a strong objection to all this. He has no doubt a noble impetuosity and fire: yet I cannot help thinking, that his excellency does not consist so much in the sublime, as in the nice distinctions, and support of his characters and manners, and the amazingly comprehensive and accurate knowledge which he discovers in the whole circle of human affairs. He is certainly sometimes sublime, but I do not recollect that he is ever so in his descriptions of the divinity. The reason of this is indeed very evident. Nothing is sublime in mere weak, passionate, inconstant man; and Homer's divinities are scarcely any thing better. Even the celebrated description of Jupiter's ambrosial locks, his sable brows, and tremendous nod, which has been such a subject of admiration to ancient and modern critics, I must confess does not give me any impression of the sublime. Had the idea been truly such, it could not have been so exactly exprest by the chisel of Phidias*.—But I am

* Mrs. Carter's reasoning seems to be more accurate than that of the critics alluded to. It is perfectly clear that the utmost art of man can represent nothing that does not belong to man. But the fact is that, as she intimates, Homer's divinities excel man in nothing but in power; and not always even in that. The description of Jupiter is that of a man, except

am rambling I know not whither, and it will be wiser to stay till I have what you promise me on this subject, than to venture any thing further of my own. We are, I am persuaded by what you say, exactly of a mind in one particular about these Letters. Though I think them very ingenious, and often very true, and the writer in many instances discovers a poetical taste, yet there is a kind of flippancy in the style and manner, that perpetually vexed and teized me. But this is only *entrenous*, for I do not love to find fault with an author, by whom in general I am entertained and taught. In consideration of my giving all due honor to Cowley's Pindarics, will you allow me to think his love verses most lamentable nonsense! with neither poetry nor sentiment, nor the least indication that the man had ever been in love, except that as a poet, he thought it necessary to talk about it.

I am sorry for the incapacity of your dressing-room, but I hope you will be able to get enough into your garden and woods to render it the less necessary for you. Your scheme of omitting the house, and improving the plantations, is founded on a motive equally noble and wise. Time would sink the proudest palace you could raise into

except in the "tremendous nod," which could not be a subject for the chisel.

ruins,

ruins, but eternity will secure to you the wealth which is applied in the encouragement of honest industry, and the relief of distress. Such, my dearest friend, may ever be the use you make of that wealth with which a gracious Providence has entrusted you. Ever yours, &c.

LETTER CLXXXIII.

Deal, *June* 30, 1775.

By the time this letter can arrive to you, I hope it will find you tolerably settled after your long journey, and if you have had the delightful cooling showers we have, they must have greatly refreshed you after the London heat you complained of. I rejoice our dear Sylph was still there to solace and comfort you after all your fatigues.

Indeed, my dear friend, you must dispense with the silence you enjoined me with regard to your goodness to me *, for I am sure you would not wish me to carry the appearance of ingra-

* This relates to Mrs. Montagu's kindness and liberality in settling an hundred pounds a year upon Mrs. Carter, for her life, by bond, immediately after the decease of Mr. Montagu.

titude

titude to you, and of unkindness to the rest of my friends in concealing from them what would give them pleasure. Miss Cooper mentioned it to me in a letter which I received this week; and it was mentioned to me again in one from a friend in this neighbourhood, who heard it from Mrs. W. Robinson, and therefore if I was ever so desirous to obey your commands it would be to no purpose.

I have this moment received the welcome news of your being tolerably comfortably settled, and I have to assure you, that our southern regions have not had much advantage over your northern climes, as the weather has been very tempestuous, but the sky is now calm, but I am not well enough to get into any regular study, for I have at present small powers for application; but I thank God, I am for great part of my time capable of harmless trifling, and where much good is not to be done, the keeping one's self in cheerfulness and good humour by innocent amusements is what one has to do. If I am permitted to enjoy the blessing of seeing and hearing that my friends present and absent go on well and prosperously, the interruptions of my schemes which depend on an aching head, will be of small consequence to the quiet of my heart; and when I am incapable of more important studies, I shall

be

be extremely contented with watching the growth of geraniums and myrtles.

I have had great amusement in reading Mrs. Williams's work. The poetry is beyond the common style of rhyming, and the Fairy Tale enchantingly beautiful. But the conclusion is faulty, and leaves too melancholy an impression on one's mind. Human folly, the source of poor Floretta's ill-directed wishes, is not irremissible guilt; and the idea of her finally sinking under the miserable consequences of them, is inexpressibly painful. This conclusion is liable to the same objection as Mr. Johnson's Rasselas *. Have you ever met with a dream or vision on female authors? I was entertained by it. It is about Mrs. Macaulay and several other female authors, among the rest your friend. It is about a silver standish and peacock's feathers. It is too long to give you an account of it, other than that after the candidates have put in their several claims, the standish is adjudged to Mrs. Macaulay, and all the other ladies are dismissed with peacock's feathers.

* These remarks shew the critical accuracy of Mrs. Carter's judgment. She was certainly ignorant at that time, and perhaps never knew, that the Fairy Tale, and several of the poems, published under the name of Mrs. Williams, were actually written by Dr. Johnson.

The

The head that is too weak to carry on the thread of history must be contented with what it can gain from an Essay. So instead of Tacitus, I have taken up the Spectator, which I have not read for so many years, that in some parts it is entirely new to me. I remember when I first read these papers, which was when I was extremely young, I was always charmed with Mr. Addison's, and very highly preferred them to Sir Richard Steele's, though at that time I should have been very much puzzled to explain for what reason. It gives me great pleasure to find at this reading, that any improvement in judgment serves in this instance only to confirm the first natural impressions which both writers made upon my mind. Never surely did age or country produce a finer critic, a more polite scholar, or a purer and more amiable moralist than Mr. Addison. Had he been born on the banks of Ilyssus, he would have been a disciple of Socrates. I know not whether his genius might have reached all the sublime, or the spirit of Plato; but he would have possessed all the gentle virtues and elegant graces of Xenophon, with the advantage of a more vivid imagination. As he had the happiness to be the disciple of a Master infinitely superior to the wisest of mortal instructors, he excels both his congenial minds.

His piety is unmixed by error, and his moral without a fault.

I had lately a very entertaining and animated account of the Regatta from one of the Spectators. It does not, however, alter my opinion of the absurdity of lavishing so much expence and trouble, and parade upon such trifling subjects. The magnificence of public show should be appropriated to important events, in which it would strike the imagination with a well directed admiration and awe. It is properly applied in the exhibitions of sovereign authority in the solemn transactions of courts of judicature, in the decoration of living merit, and in the last honours of departed greatness; but surely it is most perversely squandered in furnishing an entertainment for *maccaroni* gentlemen, and *coterie* fine ladies. Amusement is an idle trifler, by no means entitled to pomp and costly decoration, but should be left without preparation or assistance to gather for herself the roses, which she may happen to find scattered through the walks of life.

Have you heard of the manner in which Mr. U—— has treated Lady C—— M——, and do not you feel great indignation thereat? I have not the honor of knowing Lady Caroline, but have always heard her mentioned as a most amiable,

able, respectable, and delightful character by those who do. What a wretch must he be! who could trifle with the affections of such a woman, and expose her to the mortification of being the subject of public conversation; nothing is too bad for him, and I hope he will every where meet with the contempt he deserves.

My brother and sister are going to Paris next week; they mean to take a six weeks trip, so it is probable they may go a little further. Adieu, my dear friend. I hope to hear from you soon.

LETTER CLXXXIV.

Deal, *July* 12, 1775.

I SHOULD not, my dear friend, have deferred thanking you for your two kind letters till now, had I not been such a poor languid creature as to be unable to hold a pen. My spirits are unusually low, but I am determined to exert myself, as the only means of growing better. I heartily congratulate you on the happiness you must enjoy in diffusing plenty, and cheerfulness and instruction among your tenants and dependents. I do not feel any regret that your

your employments are not more illustrious, nor such as would make an *eclat* in history. True virtue is a mighty quiet thing; it operates like the still beneficial influences of gentle showers, and warm sun beams, while the glories and triumphs of ambition flash with the mischief of lightning, and roar with the havock of an inundation, or a storm.

But as much as I rejoice in the excellence of your employments, I cannot help fearing too great an exertion of your activity; consider how much your mind has been harassed, and though you can dispatch more business in a given time than any body I ever heard of, yet let me beg of you not to do too much. I had a letter last night from our Sylph; she seems to be very uneasy about Mrs. Hancock. I hope more than is necessary, as upon the whole she is better; she says she lives like a Carthusian in a cottage; but that she could lodge me, and she longs very much to consult with you.

A thousand thanks to you, my dear friend, for all the kind expressions in your letter. I should be very unwilling to use any language that you disapprove; but why should *gratitude* be at all inconsistent with the tenderest affection? I certainly did not mean to restrain this feeling merely to a pecuniary benefit, which is only one instance among

among so many others of what I owe you, and which I most readily acknowledge, from the influence of your friendship on the happiness of my life, to be worth much more than the sum you have set.

I agree to all you say about Sir R. Steele; I was besides amazed to find in a writer of his popular reputation, such a strange want of correctness, as often renders his meaning obscure, and sometimes totally unintelligible. I never heard any thing to the disadvantage of Mr. Addison's character, except his fatal excess in drinking, which, considering the unhappiness of constitutional diffidence from which he was seduced into it, I have always looked on rather as a pitiable weakness, than a brutal vice. It certainly was not enough for Mr. Addison to be merely not a bad man. I should not suppose, indeed, that he was formed for actions of *eclat*; but I cannot help thinking, that he was possessed of all those unambitious and silent virtues, which without any solicitude to be divulged by the breath of fame, quietly wait for their proclamation, till the sound of the last trump.

Mrs. Howe mentioned Madame de Beaumont's book to me with approbation, and what you say of it gives me still greater curiosity to see it. I am willing to allow you that the French under-

stand human nature better than the English, provided you will grant that it is because their heads are less philosophical, and their hearts less honest than ours. The English love reasoning better than they do fact, and are usually more accurate judges of what human creatures ought to be, than of what they are. In the next place, as their character is, I believe, much less designing and artful than that of the French, they find themselves less interested in the study of a successful application to the follies and passions of others, which is so necessary to all selfish views. To be sure you will think that no mortal ever made a more spiteful concession than I have done. However, consider the point, and tell me if I am in the wrong.

It is not probably so much from our being less accurate judges of the subject, as from another reason, that Richardson's works are more admired by the French than among us. To the generality of readers, if characters are ever so naturally drawn, they will not appear to be so, if they are improperly drest. Foreigners, who are not acquainted with our language, and our customs, are unprejudiced by Richardson's defect in expression and manners, which are so very striking to ourselves, as to conceal much of his very great merit in other respects.

I sub-

I subscribe to your opinion in contradiction to Rochefaucault. If "*l'aimable,*" without any reciprocation "*d'amitié,*" was of itself the object of grief, the histories of every past century, would furnish their readers with perpetual subjects of lamentation. I never read much of Rochefaucault; but from all I ever did read or hear, surely very few writers ever chose to publish to the world, with so little reserve, the narrow maxims of a selfish heart. But the vain conceit of superior understanding often renders people so enamoured of their own system, that they lose all sensibility both of its being wrong in itself, and disgraceful to their own character. Nothing but such an ignorance of their effect on the minds of their readers, could render authors fond of exposing principles which discover them to be unworthy of that esteem, which most people desire, and of that kindness which, on innumerable occasions, all people must want.

My brother and sister embarked at Dover on Thursday, before three in the morning, and got to Calais about seven, after a most delightful passage. About eleven there arose such a storm of wind and thunder as was frightful, and I cannot be too thankful they escaped it.

My dear friend, ever yours.

LETTER CLXXXV.

Deal, *July* 24, 1775.

I AM delighted, my dear friend, that you have at length fixed your time for leaving Northumberland, and shall be still happier in your arrival at Tunbridge. I am glad you approve of my plan, as I have just determined on setting out sooner than I had intended; but not knowing how long you might stay, and thinking it right to give myself the choice of the waters, and, moreover, invited by our Sylph, and almost driven out of this place by Mrs. Underdown and my other friends; I have fixed on Thursday next for my journey. The dear Sylph has offered me a lodging, having "*a la Vesey*" totally forgot, that she had engaged her said only spare room before she left London to poor Mr. Walker. However, she has taken one for me in her neighbourhood, and, except sleep desires to supply me with the other non-naturals which I may require, so I shall be with her great part of the day, but design to breakfast in my own lodging. There certainly will be no contest at your arrival,

as

as the Sylph very well knows, and I have reminded her, that my engagement is to you. Poor soul; she is in a sad taking for fear you should not come to Tunbridge till she is going to leave it, as she is engaged to Mrs. Pitt the latter end of August.

Indeed, my dear friend, you must have mistaken what I said about my brother, who is the kindest and the best of brothers. He never exacted any promise from me that I would not leave Deal; he only expressed a kind and affectionate apprehension to others, that I should be less at Deal than usual. I knew he was to go abroad, and I should have been very unhappy not to have spent some time with him first. And I hope to see him many, many weeks after his return, which I believe will be about the time of my return from Tunbridge.

It is probable that the reason you mention may have contributed to the sinking of my spirits. I do not willingly indulge any painful reflections, and my mind, I hope, is perfectly resigned; but I cannot sometimes help thinking of my very great loss, and feeling a difference of which every object in this place so often reminds me. But this by habit will grow less striking. My brother's absence being only I hope a short one, is of little consequence; but my pleasure in the

return

return of my sister Douglas, is checked by the thought that this is the last time of her residence here. I have so long enjoyed the advantage and delight of living in the midst of so many of my own family, doubly endeared to me by a thousand attentions and kindnesses, that I cannot help feeling this dispersion, perhaps a great deal more than I strictly ought, considering how many blessings I have still left; I can only say all this is nothing to reason; but it is of great importance to one's heart. I never mention this to infect others, but the reason why my friends are hurrying me away, is that my friends I believe see all this, and think a change of scene absolutely necessary for me, as my head has been playing some of its very worst tricks lately.

I had a letter last week from Lady Dartrey, in which she mentions having heard that Montagu * was to go abroad with you. I should not have named this, but for the sake of telling you, I know not from whom she had her information, but most certainly not from me. I had a letter yesterday from my brother, from Paris, dated the 16th; he and his ladies seem very well amused, but I believe will not be sorry when they return. They stay about a fortnight longer at Paris, and

* The Editor.

then

then visit some of the provincial towns. Adieu, my dearest friend; assure yourself I will use all that portion of exertion the Almighty has blessed me with towards recovering my spirits, and being as well as he will allow me to be; that we may very soon meet is the first wish of the heart of

Ever yours.

LETTER CLXXXVI.

Tunstal, *September* 28, 1775.

This letter I hope will find you quietly sitting in your dressing room in Hill-street. When I was waked yesterday morning by the flash of lightning, and the roar of thunder, I thought with great comfort, that it happened at an hour when you could not be on the road. I had a view of the whole storm, which was to a high degree solemn and sublime. In the midst of it, while all the rest of the hemisphere was in gloom and confusion, the sun arose in full splendour, and for some minutes seemed to look out a calm spectator of the conflicting elements.

He

He then withdrew, and resigned the skies to the tempest*, which continued for about two hours after, and then ended in wind and rain, which ceased by the time you would probably set out on your journey, and finished in a bright and serene afternoon.

I hope your chaise returned in time for your conveyance to the spring. The day was charming, and the road from Tunbridge to Maidstone perfectly good, with a very few symptems of the excessive rains of the preceding days. To be sure there never was any mortal gentlewoman, otherwise of a quiet disposition, who pulls and tuggs, and hauls poor old Time by the forelock, as I do, of which I usually find the advantage, for by setting out so very early, I hope I avoided any inconvenience to you from the conveyance you were so good as to give me to Tunbridge; and, moreover, I was able to call on my friends at Teston, where I had so often been very kindly invited. Mrs. Bouverie's abode is exceedingly pastoral, and pretty, and the view is greatly im-

* This beautiful, and highly poetical passage may remind the reader of Ossian's address to the Sun, in the conclusion of the poem of "Carthon." "When the world is dark with tempests; when thunder rolls and lightning flies, thou lookest in thy beauty from the clouds, and laughest at the storm."

proved

proved by the " Silver Medway," which glides through a very arcadian valley, within sight of the window, and is ornamented by a beautiful little bridge. I walked a good deal about the park, and breakfasted there. Mrs. Bouverie was so good as to send a servant on horseback with me to Maidstone, who was to get before me to the inn, that Dr. Pennington's carriage might be ready against I arrived. When I did arrive, I was most agreeably surprized to find Mrs. Pennington and Montagu waiting for me; we got to Tunstal about three. Between Maidstone and Teston one of the horses fell, which frightened me a good deal, as he plunged and broke some of the tackle, which, I thank God, was all the mischief, for the driver was not hurt.

I hope to be at Deal to-morrow; the Dr. and Mrs. Pennington take Montagu to town next week to equip him for his expedition, and the week after will send him to me, that he may be ready to attend your commands for Dover. I am commissioned to express their utmost gratitude for this, and so many instances of your friendship, and which I can never repay in any other way than by that sincere attachment and affection, by which I am, my dearest friend,

Yours &c.

LETTER CLXXXVII.

Deal, *October* 8, 1775.

Græcum est non potest legi. Indeed, my dear friend, I am no Œdipus; and after a world of profound study of my own, and calling in the assistance of my brother, I still remain in absolute ignorance of your song, or prescription, or whatever species of composition it may be, and must quietly wait till you give me an explanation of it.

I am sorry you are disappointed of your house at Montauban; for though probably you might meet with many houses and many towns that may suit you just as well, yet during a long journey, it is pleasant to look forward to some determined place of rest; but this probably you may be able to accomplish by means of some of your friends at Paris. I am very glad you have, in some degree, fixed your time of setting out, as winter, from which you wish to fly, is fast approaching; I am likewise glad Sir J. P—— has taken off one of the difficulties in your choice of a *sejour*, by removing your terrors of the formidable *vent de Bise*. I begin to be very impatient for your being

being set out, in hopes this fine season may last to the end of your journey.

Mrs. Vesey did not mention the Methodist preacher to me. I suppose, from the message of the Bishop of Norwich, his abuse must have been pretty outrageous. You say Sir S. S—— sat with great satisfaction to see the prelates trimmed. If some pert lawyer, in the course of his pleading, had pelted the coif, as the Methodist did the mitre, and bestowed a plentiful abuse upon chancellors, chief justices, and chief barons, would Sir S. S—— have thought such a proceeding quite decent, or at all to the purpose of the cause? Indeed one can scarcely think it possible that when Sir S. S—— procured the pulpit, he should have guessed the subject of his preacher's discourse; but on the other hand, it is surely of some consequence to his own honor, that he should publicly have exprest his disapprobation of the monstrous use that was made of his patronage.

I am much obliged to you for Sir G. Elliot's verses, which I think very good, and of a very original turn. The "Scream of the Louvre Poets," is delightful. I long to read your Gothic History of Denmark, unless it is in Latin, to which I have antipathy nearly as strong as some folks have to a cat. I should be unwilling to declare

declare this publicly, as it might pass for affectation; but I hope it may, in some degree, contribute to make my peace with you, that as arrant a Goth as I am in other respects, I can read none but classical Latin. I have finished Tacitus, and have now began Davila, in which I have made but a small progress. My head has been upset by a small room and a larger fire, and several people in it, (meaning in the room, not the fire,) but I am better to-day. I have hitherto found Davila less dull than any of the Italian historians with whom I am acquainted, and he has a perspicuity which is very pleasing; but he has the fault, which belongs to all writers of his nation, that of being extremely circumstantial in points about which most readers are very indifferent, and very succinct where one would wish him to enlarge. You need not ask my pardon for any irreverent mention of Minerva in the Ajax of Sophocles, for you cannot think her more detestable than I do. All that one can say is, that she was a preceptress worthy of such a pupil. But the Greek writers faithfully copied nature, such as they found it in the dispositions and manners of their countrymen, that is cruel and treacherous to a degree shocking to all whose passions have been softened to humanity by better instruction and a happier state of things, which

that

that instruction has produced *. They had no other model for the characters of the popular gods than what was derived from imperfect man, and consequently they are represented with just the same weaknesses and passions. I have this afternoon been reading part of the Andromache of Euripides, where Menelaus appears such a monster of unfeeling cruelty, and contemptible cunning that I had scarcely patience to finish the scene. Amongst a people who carried every passion to such a wild excess, with what an astonishing superiority of virtue and gentleness of humanity appear the philosophers of the Socratic school.

I have been reading Racine, and endeavouring to admire him more than I formerly did. How I may improve as I go on, I know not; but if you beat me for it, I cannot help thinking that Pyrrhus and Alexander make love "*en petit maîtres*," and one should never guess who they were, if their names were not set to the pictures. It is said, I think, that Racine has drawn all his characters such as they were; but to me the greatest

* See this idea expanded and shewn to be well-founded, by the late excellent Bishop Porteus, in a pamphlet published in 1806, the title of which is "The beneficial Effects of Christianity on the temporal Concerns of Mankind, proved from History and from Facts."

part

part of his heroes and heroines appear to be mere *marquises et comtesses.* I am not yet got to the Athalie and Esther, which perhaps may please me better. Good night, my very dear friend; may your sleep be calm, and your waking such as I wish you.

LETTER CLXXXVIII.

Deal, *October* 28, 1775.

It grieves me, my dearest friend, to find your recovery advance so slowly, and yet it is not very surprizing that the sick should be slow in recovering, at a time when the most healthy are sickening; all our family have been attacked by the same influenza you had; my brother is very bad, and so is poor Montagu, who really bears his disappointment better than could be expected from a boy of his age, and comforts himself with the hope that you will next summer go to Rome, and that he shall have the delight of crossing the Alps, as Hannibal did.

There has been great mischief done lately by the dreadful storms. A ship bound to Jamaica, with thirty passengers on board, was sunk in that terrible

terrible gulph, the Goodwin Sands; and it is feared all on board perished, as the sea ran so high, no boat could venture to them. A Dutch East-Indiaman was yesterday lost on the same spot, but the weather being more moderate, our Deal men saved all the people.

Some passengers who lately landed here from Boston, gave a lamentable account of the situation of the poor people there. They exculpated General Gage from any blame, and affirmed that he had done all that was in his power. A lady in this company, was in so great a hurry to find herself upon English ground, that as soon as the ship came into the Downs, she ventured into a boat in so rough a sea, that several refused to follow her example. One can easily imagine how transported the poor woman must be, at being perfectly assured she was out of the reach of that wretched country. Mr. Hey, the Judge Advocate of Quebec, has sent home his most valuable effects, and probably would be glad if he could dispense with the point of honor which prevents his accompanying them. Did you read Mr. Penn's examination, and was not one of his answers very curious: "That the Americans were content to submit while they found no inconvenience from it?" Are there any laws by which the people of any community whatever do not

not suffer some inconvenience or other, and is this a reason for throwing off their authority?

The human soul has indeed many kinds of existence, but they are all wisely accommodated to the various wants of its complicated nature, and the cure of its moral disorders. The insignificant occupations of vulgar life, however disproportioned they may appear to the elevation of our intellectual faculties, are a necessary discipline to the irregularity of our passions, and to the perverseness of our will. The small particulars which make up our sum of general employment, form a task adapted to our moral weakness, and a lesson of humility to our pride. The exercises which we are so apt to despise, as inferior to our powers, may become the foundation of our noblest improvements, when they are performed from that principle of duty, which confers importance on the most inconsiderable objects, and dignity on the smallest circumstances of unillustrious action. The spirit may be exhausted and the inclination crossed by an unpleasant routine of business, but the soul is never debased by its attention to the lowest tasks which properly arise from the situation assigned by Providence. It loses its dignity only from the indulgencies of wrong tendencies and the frivolous pursuits of voluntary follies. And so, my dear friend,

friend, however troublesome all these letters and papers may be about your coal-mines, heed it not, it is a part of your duty that must be done; only let me entreat you not to do too much, and write no more than you can help.

I lately met with Lady M. W. Montagu's Letters, they have certainly wit, knowledge, and observation; but there is such a defect of delicacy and of sentiment, that one could never wish such a writer either for a companion or a friend. You will think I have found an admirable contrast for Lady Mary, in setting myself down in sober sadness to read Guiccardini; probably it may require all my reverence for history to enable me to get to the end of such a volume. If I was a Papist, you would think I had been enjoined my present set of studies by way of penance, as Lucan is another of my authors whom I have often begun to no purpose, but am now determined to go through, though it seems to me such a kind of task as swallowing hard dumplings. All this solid diet is somewhat lightened by Plutarch's Apophthegms, which are tolerably amusing; and yet with all due veneration for the wisdom of antiquity, one half at least of these notable sayings of the sages and heroes of Greece and Rome might have been as well forgot as remembered; and a poor modern writer who should

make such a collection would never be read. But all objects are magnified by the perspective through which we take a view of antiquity.

What a strange bustle about Mr. S——; stories of plots and conspiracies, they make one shudder. I talked to-day with a person who knows R——, and says he has a very bad character, and I heard the same account of him afterwards, from another person. Adieu, my dear friend, let me very soon have just six lines to say your health mends, that will be quite enough for your truly affectionate, &c.

LETTER CLXXXIX.

Deal, *October* 31, 1775.

Though I wish you, my dearest friend, in a more quiet situation; yet as you are pretty well, I approve of your scheme of completing your business now it is *en train*; and of your passing a few more unpleasant weeks, in the hope that they will exempt you from such a repetition of hurry and fatigue.

Surely your information must be right of some secret reason for confining Mr. S——, besides that

that strange wild accusation. R—— is well known in this neighbourhood. A gentleman not very far from hence, had treated him very kindly, and lent him money to purchase a commission. He repaid the favor by an *arrangement* with his wife. As an English esquire does not take to this Chesterfield system quite so peaceably as a French marquis, the husband threw him into prison for the money he had lent him. He was released by an act of insolvency, and how he obtained his present employment I know not. I am glad to hear Mr. S—— is bailed on such moderate security, not that I am at all interested about the patriots of these days; but I hope it is a symptom that the whole will vanish without any plot, real or pretended. In either case, it scarcely ever happens but numbers of innocent people, in some way or other, become sufferers.

By what I have seen of Dr. Brown's writings, he appeared to me to have considerable talents, and to have applied them to the service of virtue, and I think, he was by no means regarded in the manner which his merit as an author deserved. The world, which shows great lenity to open and profligate wickedness, never gives a favorable turn to a doubtful conduct. Wilkes and Churchill were read and admired, for what reason no unprejudiced person can guess, unless that they run

all lengths of a party; Dr. Brown was abused and neglected, principally, I imagine, because he found the measures and persons whom he had too hastily approved, less deserving than he had thought them. I think it is very probable that the cruel sarcasms which were so often thrown out against him in the papers, might exasperate the sufferings of a distempered mind, and drove his disorder to its last terrible violence. It plainly appears by his letter to Dr. Lowth, that he was extremely sensible to the treatment which he had received from the world.

I am obliged to you for the picture you have sent me of the ruins of the abbey. The grotesque figures are a strange absurdity to common sense, but I believe very frequent in all our ancient buildings. On the old altar-piece of Canterbury cathedral are several little paintings taken from the History of Reynard the Fox, which, however it is now degraded to a twelve-penny duodecimo in a sheep-skin cover, I have seen in a venerable black-letter quarto.

It is ill for our reputation in the *belles lettres*, if it depends on the merit allowed to Shakespear by foreigners. At least, I am persuaded with every elucidation that can be thrown on him, from the ablest commentators, it is utterly impossible that he can ever be well understood, except

except by a native of Great Britain. One sees, even by Voltaire, who is more capable, I suppose, than most foreigners of penetrating his meaning, how wretchedly he has been misinterpreted. I have been told that Voltaire has been ingenuous enough to own that he has mistaken his sense. I perfectly agree with you that the dramatic art is ill understood. One of the best things in Mr. Johnson's Preface, I think, is confuting the nonsense which critics talk about time and place. I have lately gone through several volumes of his Shakespear; he discovers his own singularity of manner in the cool severity and contempt with which he usually treats the comments of others, and in the unassuming carelessness and indifference with which he proposes his own. In this I am persuaded he is perfectly unaffected, for he has no vanity, and I believe there never was a human mind more totally regardless of censure or applause. This renders him the more excusable for the little tenderness which he has shown for the weakness of others in this respect. Yet he is not totally free from blame. Though he could not judge of the effect of his criticisms, from his own feelings, a knowledge of mankind might have taught him, that people whose minds are not of the same impenetrable firmness as his own, may suffer much stronger pain than ought

to

to be inflicted on mere harmless blundering and folly, by having the instances exposed with such unmitigated severity.

Did you ever meet with a Treatise on Artificial Memory? I never looked into it till the other day, which I regret, for it is very clever, and I should think, particularly useful to young people. It is writ by Dr. Gray. I have just set about reading a book of another kind, with which I am much delighted. It is Abbadie's "*Traité de la Verité de la Religion Chrétienne.*" It appears to me a very noble work, and in some parts writ in quite an original way.

My heart thanks you for admitting me for the companion of your solitude in your projected journey to Sandleford. That this scheme is a mere castle in the air, makes very little difference in my pleasure. Any picture that furnishes agreeable reveries to the imagination, is a valuable reality, though it may never prove a matter of fact. It was the maxim of an ancient philosopher, that it is "mind alone that sees and hears," and wonderful indeed is its magic power, which can equally give life and energy to ideal forms and annihilate the objects of external sense. Even such solid bodies as the city bride and the glittering Jewess, for instance, to me were absolute non-entities, and therefore you are

not to wonder that your mention of them should in no degree alter my inflexible partiality for Tunbridge. The only effectual argument to prevent my forming any strong wishes to see it again, is from the recollection of the happiness I enjoyed while I was there: this sounds strangely paradoxical, but I think it has its foundation in the nature of things, or at least in my own feelings. In a usual and familiar residence, one takes that mixture of pleasure and vexation which makes up the general portion of life, without forming any very sanguine hopes, or feeling any very severe disappointments. The alterations shift in too quick succession to leave the mind at leisure for the association of good or evil, with any particular circumstances of place. The case is very different with regard to an unaccustomed situation. Whenever this happens to recur, accompanied always by a train of pleasing reflections, the combination between internal happiness and external scenery is so strongly formed, that the heart must feel a very painful convulsion from their separation; and in a world like this, how little reason is there to promise one's self, that such a separation will not be the consequence of another trial. "*Si je ne me comprends pas, je me divine;*" if my meaning

meaning is not clear *, I believe it is however very profound. Adieu, my dear friend.

LETTER CXC.

Deal, *November* 22, 1775.

Your last letter made me much happier, my dear friend, than any I have received from you since we parted at Canterbury. But do not presume too much on this amendment. It grieves me to find this hint is not unnecessary, as you have already began to exhaust yourself with company. That society, to a certain degree, is good for your health and spirits, I believe, but it should be under strict regulations. If you would make it a part of your invitation to dinner, that all the people are to go away at seven o'clock, or that if they stay longer, you would retire, all would be well; but if you exhaust

* There seems to be little reason for this doubt; and it may with more probability be the opinion of the reader, from this and other similar passages, that Mrs. Carter had a peculiarly happy talent in analyzing her feelings, and explaining the different sources from whence they arose.

your

your strength and spirits on them, you had better have travelled your thousand miles, and been out of their reach. Let me prescribe the advice contained in a story I heard in my nursery. "Be bold, but not too bold." Do not you think it might tend very much to the quiet and good order of these nations, if many of the speakers in both Houses, had such health as you and I have? I do not by this in any degree propose to make an exchange, as it is by no means clear whether it would do any good to ourselves or the world, if we had such health and strength as they have.

I was yesterday reading Johnson's Harry the Fifth. I wish you would see what he says on the subject of the French courtship, in which he appears to me to be perfectly right. That scene has always struck me as very uncharacteristic. In looking over the several commentators whom Mr. Johnson has quoted, one is amazed to see how they sometimes perplexed themselves about a very plain meaning. I have, in my book, taken notice of some passages which seemed to me the most remarkable.

As for Aristotle, I have deference enough for the judgment of others, who understand him better, to treat him with respect, and to suppose that my want of due admiration is an effect of my ignorance. I have heard him extolled for

precision

precision and clearness; to me he appears crabbed, perplexed, and obscure. One thing, however, I will venture to pronounce, from that observation which every body who thinks is capable of making, that no person can be a good critic in poetry, who has neither imagination nor feeling; two circumstances in which the respectable composition of Aristotle is more deficient, than that of almost any author I ever read. He might, for any thing I know, design very justly, but nothing is so tedious, and so dull, as unanimated and uncoloured sense. From a defect of sentiment his Ethics are at least as imperfect as his Poetics. Virtue will never be taught from the conclusions of mere logical principles. It respects the whole of the human composition; and to every power of the human composition ought all the precepts which recommend it to be addrest, or they will be much too cold and unaffecting to make any impression. You may be assured that I perfectly agree to your criticisms on Corneille.

I lately made a visit to Lady Oxenden *, and it gave me a real pleasure to see this very respect-

* Widow of Sir George Oxenden, Bart. and grandmother of the present Sir Henry. She was a co-heiress, with the Duchess of Manchester, of the family of Dunch, of Little Wittenham, Berks.

able,

able, amiable, and really good woman, looking at seventy-three with so much health, as seems to promise her still some years of comfortable freedom from all the infirmities of old age. She seems to enjoy the fullest reward this world can give her, of that exact temperance, that absolute freedom from every turbulent passion, and that unruffled sweetness of temper, which she has so remarkably preserved during the whole of her life. Time seems to have taken nothing from her, but a fine face, of which however he has left some very visible remains; and the head-ach, by which she was a very great sufferer in her youth.

Only think what a remedy I found yesterday for a very aching-head, in a visit I made. The Mistress of the house talked very loud, the parrot screamed, the lap-dog barked, the child cried, and the maid, to quiet all these discordant sounds, blew a horn. And all this *tintamarre* in a room no bigger than a closet, where I feared I was doomed to pass the afternoon; but happily, after I had been well stunned, we adjourned to another room, and to my great comfort left the parrot, the dog, the child, the maid and her horn behind. I hope soon to hear, my dearest friend, that you bear the fatigue of company better than I think

you

you can, and that good news will very much quiet the fears of yours, &c.

LETTER CXCI.

Deal, *December* 11, 1775.

May you have slept every night since I received your letter, my dearest friend, as you did before! I hope your nephew and Miss Gregory will have this dreadful influenza as slightly as you can wish; here it has raged dreadfully, not only on shore, but even in the ships in the Downs. The captain of a man-of-war told me the other day he had but ten men capable of doing any duty. Happy would it have been for two of those who were well, had they like the rest been confined to their hammocks by the influenza. They quarrelled, and one stabbed the other to the heart. The murderer is in irons, and probably will soon meet the fate he too well deserves. The poor man who was killed, was brought on shore to be buried, and he was put into a hole "*sans autre forme de procès.*" This will do him no manner of harm; but is it not a

strange indecency that in that state where all are equal, there should be any distinction made *? It seems the more hard that the poor sailors should be deprived of the common rites of burial, as part of their pay is deducted for the provision of a Chaplain. Little as this ceremony imports the dead, it strongly affects the living, and our laws accordingly endeavour to guard against some crimes, by making the omission a part of the punishment.

I very sincerely feel your kind solicitude about my health, but I assure you I am much as usual. I agree with you entirely, in the resolution of keeping out of the easy chair as long as I possibly can hold my head up; and am often happy in the thought, how little the many pleasing amusements of my life, have ever depended upon the fleeting season of youth. Yet certainly, however little alteration the train of one's ideas might suffer from the approach of age, the more years one has lived, the less reason there is for forming any distant schemes, either of time or place. Death may easily call one home from a morning walk, but it seems to me quite an affair, for him

* This indecency at least has long ceased to exist; and sailors brought on shore for that purpose, are buried with as much attention to the propriety due to a religious ceremony, as is bestowed on any other rank of the community.

to

to haul one over sea and land from Venice or from Rome.

I have not seen Monsieur D'Alembert's book, but most heartily join with your disapprobation of the scheme of it. These philosophical novel writers recommend an admirable scheme of conduct for young women, and such, no doubt, as must rejoice their hearts, if they found it pursued by their own sisters or daughters! Such writings from such authors are excessively mischievous. I have often been shocked to find, that one scarcely ever met with a girl, who did not without reserve, defend and applaud Rousseau's Julia. D'Alembert is, I think, one of the Encyclopedian writers. It is no wonder that those, who endeavour to destroy all the original principles of virtue, should confound the distinctions, and subvert the order of society.

By this time I suppose Mr. W—— may lawfully bury the poor D—— of G——. Do you ever read the strange, wild speeches of the patriots? I am not a courtier, but I cannot help thinking, in the spirit of impartiality, that notwithstanding all the causes of complaint, we are upon the whole in better hands, than if we were given up to the opposition. I rejoice to hear that so eminent and good a man as the Bishop of Bristol is likely to remain some time longer in the

the world, which can ill afford to lose any such characters. I hope our dear friends in Bolton Row are well, I quite long for the time when we shall all meet in the delectable blue room; a very few weeks more, and I shall be with you.

Sweet Lady Lothian leaves this neighbourhood to-morrow, she travels to town in the same coach with her five children and their nurse; is not this, in these our days, very exemplary for a Marchioness. Indeed she well deserves all the praise that is given her, and the affection of all those who have the honor to be acquainted with her. Good night, my dearest friend.

LETTER CXCII.

Deal, *December* 31, 1775.

You cannot think, my dearest friend, independant of my own particular interest in it, the delight with which I read the account of that one solitary evening in your dressing-room. There is something indeed peculiarly soothing in the quiet that is enjoyed, while all the world that is about one is in a bustle. While I was happy in your present reflections on the agitations of the world,

world, I could have shuddered to think on the dangers you have escaped, in not being early placed in the situation which you describe. Who can guess in such circumstances what might have been the consequences of ambition, when actuated by a genius so vivid, and assisted by faculties so various and extensive! Every wrong principle is the most dreadfully mischievous in the greatest understandings, and poisons acquire the most fatal strength from the brightest sun-beams. It will seem very absurd, while I am supposing three or four kingdoms thrown absolutely off the hinges, to find room to mention so insignificant an individual as myself; yet for the life of me, I cannot help thinking what I must have lost, if for my good, as well as yours, and that of the said three or four kingdoms, this gallant spirit had not been happily checked. It is quite impossible we ever could have been friends. Under the influence of such a disposition you would no more have thought of loving me, than of loving a sprig of balm or lavender; and I should no more have dreamed of loving you, than of loving a blazing comet. From any thing that appears at present, you do not seem to be in the least danger of ever incurring the evil of an "ill-timed "activity," but if ever it should happen, you may be very sure I shall not forget your commission;

sion; indeed it will be but a fair return, that as your spirit enlivens my indolence, my quiet should temper your vivacity.

I hope you get out this very delightful weather; I walked to Ripple yesterday, and returned home in the evening through some charming fields, terminated by a distant view of the sea, which was rendered very distinctly visible from its being illuminated by the moon-beams. The beauty of this appearance, the freshness of the air, the tranquillity of the winter sky, and the subject of my own thoughts, gave a delightful calm and cheerfulness to my spirits; till at length I recollected it was night, that I was alone, and scarcely within sight of a house; and then I began to feel all manner of cowardly indeterminate fears, and to start at every bush. Wretched weakness of imperfect virtue, and of faultering faith, that trembles under the guardianship of Omnipotence! I feel scarcely any thing so mortifying to my my mind, as any kind of terror, nor can I find in all philosophy so effectual a remedy against pride.

I most perfectly and entirely agree with your opinion of the strange impropriety with which Lord M—— treated the Duchess of Kingston's trial. As to the people of *good heart*, who bestow so much pity on her, did they feel any com-

passion for this unhappy woman, when she was triumphing in the success of prosperous wickedness? Yet surely a human soul is infinitely more wretched from unrepented guilt, than from the legal detection of its crimes.

So Mrs. Rudd has dexterously slipped through the fingers of the law, and "*fruitur diis iratis.*" I do not mean by this to express any disapprobation of her acquittal, which did honor to her judge, as there was no positive proof against her, and the worst offenders ought not to be punished in a court of justice, by the strongest conviction of private judgment, without legal evidence. I hope Mrs. Vesey left you on Thursday at a reasonable hour, and that you have not suffered since for the indulgence of a social dinner. If this letter should happen to be opened at the post-office, it will be imagined there is some danger that Mrs. Vesey may keep you up half the night to hard drinking.

I propose to set out for Tunstal on the 27th, and hope to be so happy as to see you the end of that week. I am very busy winding up my bottoms, but a little business at a time is all I am able to go through. Adieu, my dearest friend.

LETTER CXCIII.

London, *May* 15, 1776.

WHATEVER Lethean spring the fine folks of this world may have discovered to enable them to forget their friends, they have not imparted a drop of it, to any one so unfashionable as I am; and therefore I entreat you not to avail yourself of any false suppositions, as a fair pretence for your forgetting me. I believe I may equally answer for the Sylph, who, whatever present objects may crowd on her attention, never loses sight of the more remote; for, like Bartholomew Cokes * she is to be satisfied with nothing less than the whole fair. With regard to other play-things, I am rather more moderate than she is; but I am just as ready to whimper if I cannot get all the dolls together who happen to be drest to my own fancy. Now, as of all possible dolls, it has never been my chance to meet with any one in the whole fair drest precisely like you; I leave you to guess how the not finding you within my reach must operate upon my play.

* In Ben Jonson's Play of "Bartholomew Fair."

You will judge by all this nonsense that I am in much better spirits than when I wrote last. My accounts from Mrs. Underdown are, I thank God, perfectly good, she seems to retain scarce any of the symptoms attending a paralytic seizure, and I have heard of many people who have been attacked equally violently, and recovered perfectly, and have lived for many years, without any return of the disorder.

In a world like this, the blessing of many tender connections must be interrupted by very frequent anxieties; I had a letter last night from James Pennington, who says his mother has been confined to her bed for four days with a rheumatic fever, this, thank God, is not alarming like poor Mrs. Underdown, but still I shall be very anxious till I know my dear sister is better.

You mention nothing about your return to us; but I have had the pleasure of hearing by a round-about-way, that it will be next week. I have very quietly hitherto resigned you to the nightingales and the zephyrs, because I knew they would do your health more good, than any thing you would find in town; but the most disinterested spirit has its limits, and I shall feel a severe mortification, if it should happen that your return to London should be deferred till after I have left it. I should have gone on the first letter after

Mrs. Underdown's illness, if she had not forbid it; she is now, I thank God, so much recovered, that I shall remain very quiet till my brother and sister return to town, when I think she will be glad to have me with her.

I know not whether you have met in the papers an account of the evasion of Lord Holdernesse's secretary. He had money in his hands for the payment of the Prince of Wales's servants, and other sums to the amount of £6000, which it is supposed must be at the expence of Lord Holdernesse. The father of this wretched fugitive left him £18,000. His place was more than £300 a year, and he lived without any visible expence, so it is supposed he has sunk it all into that gulph, where so many fortunes have been swallowed up, Change Alley.

Mr. Vesey is made a Privy Counsellor in Ireland, which I believe is very satisfactory to him; but probably our poor dear Sylph would have preferred his being made a constable or churchwarden in England. She has this afternoon been looking over the plan of the new-house at Lucan, and seems greatly disturbed to find she is to inhabit a round room, where she conceives she shall be like an old parrot in a cage; upon which Mrs. Hancock and I have promised to add scarlet trimmings to her green gown.

I have

I have lately been reading some of Cicero's Letters to Atticus. Do you remember a passage, in which he hopes something which he had writ against some person, who he apprehended had afterwards a power of hurting his interest, might be proved not to be his. It is true this was what is called a white lie, and such a one as children tell for fear of being whipt; yet at the first view it scandalized me amazingly. But this was from considering Cicero as a moralist, and a philosopher. When I reflected on him in the light of a public character, in such a scene of confusion and general corruption, as then prevailed at Rome, I could not help thinking in how few modern statesmen such a spot would be even visible. A melancholy reflection in a period of time possest of advantages which poor Cicero never knew! Many more passages struck me as I read; but I cannot, from a very muddled head, write any more on the subject just now.

There is a little book just published on the internal evidence of Christianity, which is indisputably writ by Mr. S. Jenyns. It is much read and admired by most people; but suspected by some few. I am inclined to think the author meant well, and he often argues well; but there are some exceptionable passages, and his endeavour to be very concise, sometimes I believe will

lead

ead a reader who is not very attentive, to a misapprehension of his meaning. I wish if you have read it to know your opinion.

Ranelagh is as fashionable, and fine folks go there as much at the hazard of their lives and limbs as ever. If it was one of the necessary duties of life, that people should be choked by the dust, and stifled by the effluvia of a crowded room, and that on leaving it, they should incur the danger of having their limbs broke, and their skulls fractured by the trampling of horses, what rueful lamentations would be uttered on the condition of humanity, in being subjected to such hard trials! But let all this be called by the name of pleasure, and every danger and every difficulty vanishes before it.

I admire the eloquence of your pauper, and I still more admire and honor its effect upon you. If I did not love you too well to envy you any thing, it would be the office, and the power, and the disposition of being a ministering angel to the wants of the helpless and unfriended. I rejoice to hear your dear little man goes on so prosperously. I saw Mr. Burrows lately, who speaks highly of him, and I likewise heard his eulogy from Mr. W. Burke; pray remember his aunt Carter to him. I have been spending a most

delightful

delightful evening in the dear blue room, but we sighed and wished for you. When will you come?

I yesterday knocked at three doors, but not at home was the answer, and I was too prudent to attempt any more visits, even under the temptation of becoming as illustriously fashionable as you so gaily flattered me I should be, and wearing off the scandal of my Greek, by rapping at people's doors when I was half asleep. But there are very few instances of illustricity that will pay one for a fit of the head-ach. I often think it would be mightily for your good, if you could become in some cases half as dul as I am; but that you never will be, if you live to *mil anos*; which that you may do, I love you too well to wish, unless I was to live as long too, and in that case I should love myself too well to abate you a single day. Years unmeasured by solar revolutions, and unnumbered by mortal calculations; I hope we both shall live in a happier world.

Sedes ubi Fata quietas
Ostendunt!

You will substitute a fitter expression than this heathenish word Fata.

I was last Sunday induced to do a thing for which I have been very sorry ever since. Our

Sylph

Sylph contrived to engage me to a party in the country, and we were to go early. I agreed, without thinking much about it, but afterwards I reflected that it was not right in any point of view that I should go; but with her usual tenacity she kept me to my promise. It is true I went to early church first; but I was so extremely uncomfortable, that nothing shall ever induce me to make such another engagement. I must not sacrifice any point which appears to me of consequence on such a subject, even to the strongest temptations, that of complying with my friends. And I am sure if they will consider this, they will not demand it of me.

I think by this time I have quite tired your eyes and your patience; but my head was so good, I went on without having an idea I had writ so much. Quiet repose and pleasing dreams attend you.

LETTER CXCIV.

Deal, *May* 28, 1776.

It was not, my dearest friend, till after the post was gone out, that I arrived at the end of

of my journey. I left poor dear Mrs. Pennington laid up with the rheumatism, but better than she has been; as soon as I am a little settled, she will come to me, and I hope the sea will do her good. Mrs. Underdown is better than I expected to find her, and she begins now to get into the air, and that I hope will strengthen her.

I did not find that the affair we apprehended would be so much a subject of discussion, makes any great noise. It is very true, indeed, that you fine folks, who flourish about the streets of this world in high gilded phaetons, if ever you happen to make a false step, infallibly break your necks, and every body is looking out of their windows, and running out of their shop doors, and making a fearful wondering and screaming all round you, till the next overturn supplies them with a new subject of staring. But people who jog along the *trottoir* of life, raise no such bustle. If they happen to tumble in the dirt, or run against a post, they only daub their clothes, or scratch their noses, and the crowd passes by them without stopping to make any observation on so common an accident.

I hope to hear you have past safely through all your illustrious foreign dinners. If these persons do not soon return to the Continent, they will, I fear, effectually frustrate your intention of going thither,

thither, especially as the wind is getting a point to the South, and between the heat of London, and the fracas and jargon of French *bel esprits* you will be absolutely stunned and suffocated.

I beg my love to our dear friend in Bolton-row. I hope soon to write to our dear Sylph, but at present I am in such a chaos that I know not what to set about first. Adieu, my dear friend. I am ever yours.

LETTER CXCV.

Deal, *July* 9, 1776.

Your welcome letter, my dear friend, which arrived on Saturday night was a perfect cordial to my spirits, for I was beginning to be very impatient for a line to say you were all safe arrived at the end of your journey. By this time I hope your cold is quite removed. I did not, indeed, find much reason for approbation in your travelling by moon-light at midnight, while you had this said cold.

I do not wonder that you soon grew tired of that monotony of aspect, which you found on your

your road *. One is for a little while pleased in travelling through a straight path, and a regular plantation of tall trees; but I well remember how soon I wished for the wild luxuriance of variegated hedges. The face of every country will be in some degree affected by its mode of government. In our own, where every individual enjoys his property in full security, and without restraint, there will naturally be formed that variety of disposition and appearance, which arises from the various ideas and tastes of different proprietors, unshackled by the fetters of despotic authority. I am inclined to think you will find the same tedious kind of monotony which wearied you on the road, in the character and understanding of the inhabitants, and that the chief amusement you will find will be in the raree-show, which happily for your friends in England, unless you could divest yourself of a head and heart, cannot last long.

I immediately took up my pen to make Mrs. Pennington as happy as myself, happier she cannot be, by the account you give of my ne-

* To Paris, where Mrs. Montagu was accompanied by Miss Gregory, now Mrs. Alison, daughter of the late Dr. Gregory, of Edinburgh, her nephew and heir Mr. Montagu, his tutor Mons. Blondel, and the Editor of these Letters.

phew.

phew. I trust in God he will never be ungrateful for the kindness shewn him. I am very glad Master Montagu and he are so fond of each other, and I rejoice in the pleasure their innocent hearts must feel in such an affection. A virtuous friendship will be one of the best human means to preserve them innocent. Your account struck me the more feelingly, as at the moment I received it, I had just shut the book where I had been reading a most charming description in Monsieur Rollin, of the friendship between Gregory of Nazienzen and Basil, which begun when they were studying together at Athens, and continued through their whole lives. One circumstance is remarkable, that though with the most inflexible resolution, they refused to join in the irregular amusements of other young people, their tempers and manners were so engaging, that they never made an enemy, even among those to whom the strictness of their conduct was a reproach. In the articles of temper and manner, our youths, I think, have equal advantages; God grant their Christian principles may be as strong, and render their virtue as pure. I very sensibly feel the kindness of what you say of our friendship. May it continually improve our mutual virtue, and our mutual happiness, till both

are compleated in that world where neither will receive any interruption *.

I am much obliged to Colonel Dromgold for his remembrance, and beg my best compliments to him, and many thanks for the charming little collection he was so good as to send me. I rejoice to hear his daughter is out of danger.

Mrs. Underdown desires her best respects to you, and many thanks for your kind enquiry, she is very much better than could have been ex-

* What additional delight does it give to friendship, when it can thus be considered as surviving the decays of nature, and flourishing anew in a future and eternal state! This can, of course, be true only of virtuous friendship. Mrs. Carter had no doubt that, in their glorified state, souls will be conscious of, and will renew the pure and innocent attachments which they have begun in this life. It is remarkable that Cicero, though he wanted that certainty which can only be acquired through the inestimable advantage of Revelation, formed the same opinion. He expresses it in the plainest and strongest terms, in the sublime conclusion of his treatise " de Senectute," which it is impossible to read without being reminded of a passage in the xiith chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, on the same subject, which as much exceeds it in sublimity, as the Apostle had clearer views of a future life than the philosopher enjoyed. In his Dialogue " de Amicitia" also, Cicero maintains the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and of its consciousness of what has passed in this state.

pected,

pected, and two days ago went with a friend to Dover in the morning, and returned at night, the better for her excursion. For myself, I go on much in the old way head-achs and rheumatisms; and very thankful I have nothing worse. As I do not know how to direct to you, I shall enclose this to the *gallant* Captain Osborn.

I believe you will find many instances besides Chantilly, that the French have a world of fancy, and not a grain of imagination. You will be better entertained when you get into the sickle of Pepin and Charlemagne, and the Abbe Suger. Do pray wish for your Gothic friend when you visit St. Denis, and I will excuse you as to the King of Prussia, about whom I have no manner of curiosity. You call him a singular character, for which I dare say you have good reasons, which do not at present occur to me, to whom he appears very little different from other destroyers, other tyrants, and other profligates.

I remember Mr. B——, and his orange coloured stockings, to which I took as strong an aversion as Olivia did to Malvolio's. If the man had worn no stockings at all, it might have been a philosophical negligence; but stockings of orange colour was a positive depravity. Be so good in your next to let me know how to direct to you, for as there is no post from Deal to Dover,

Dover, I have not always an opportunity of sending my letters to Captain Osborn. Adieu, my dear friend, my love to your nephew and mine.

END OF VOL. II.

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